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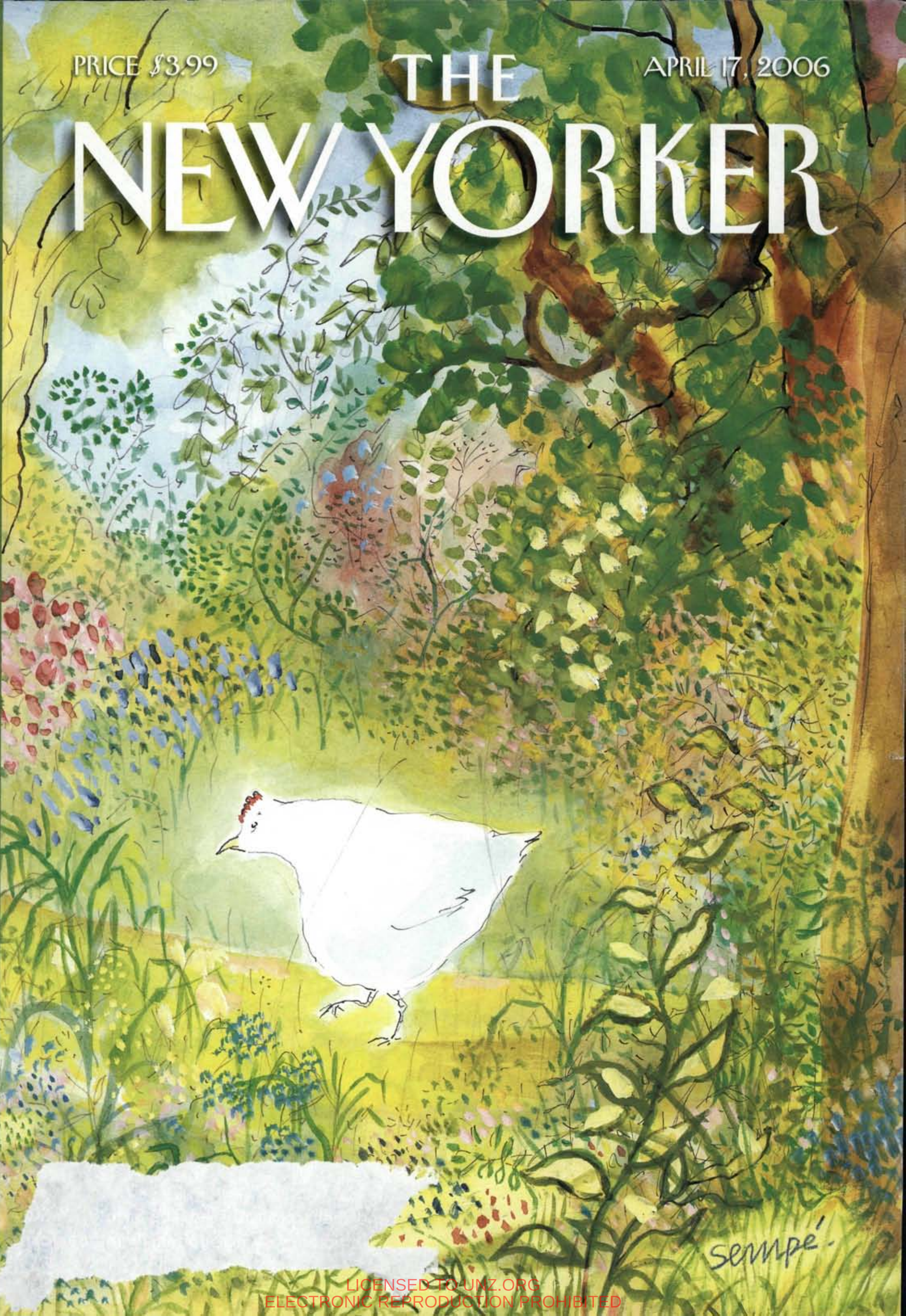
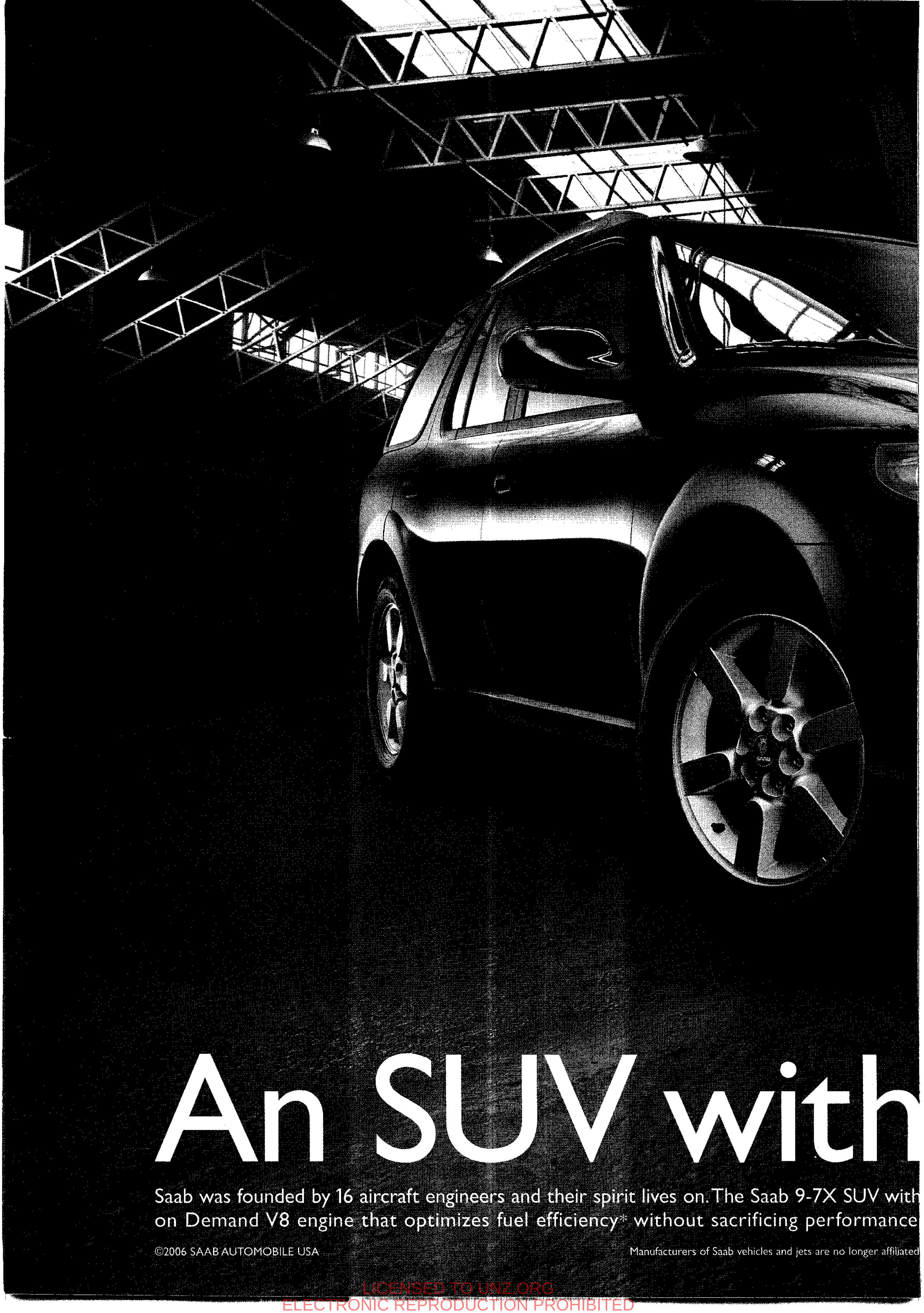
# THE NEW YORKER





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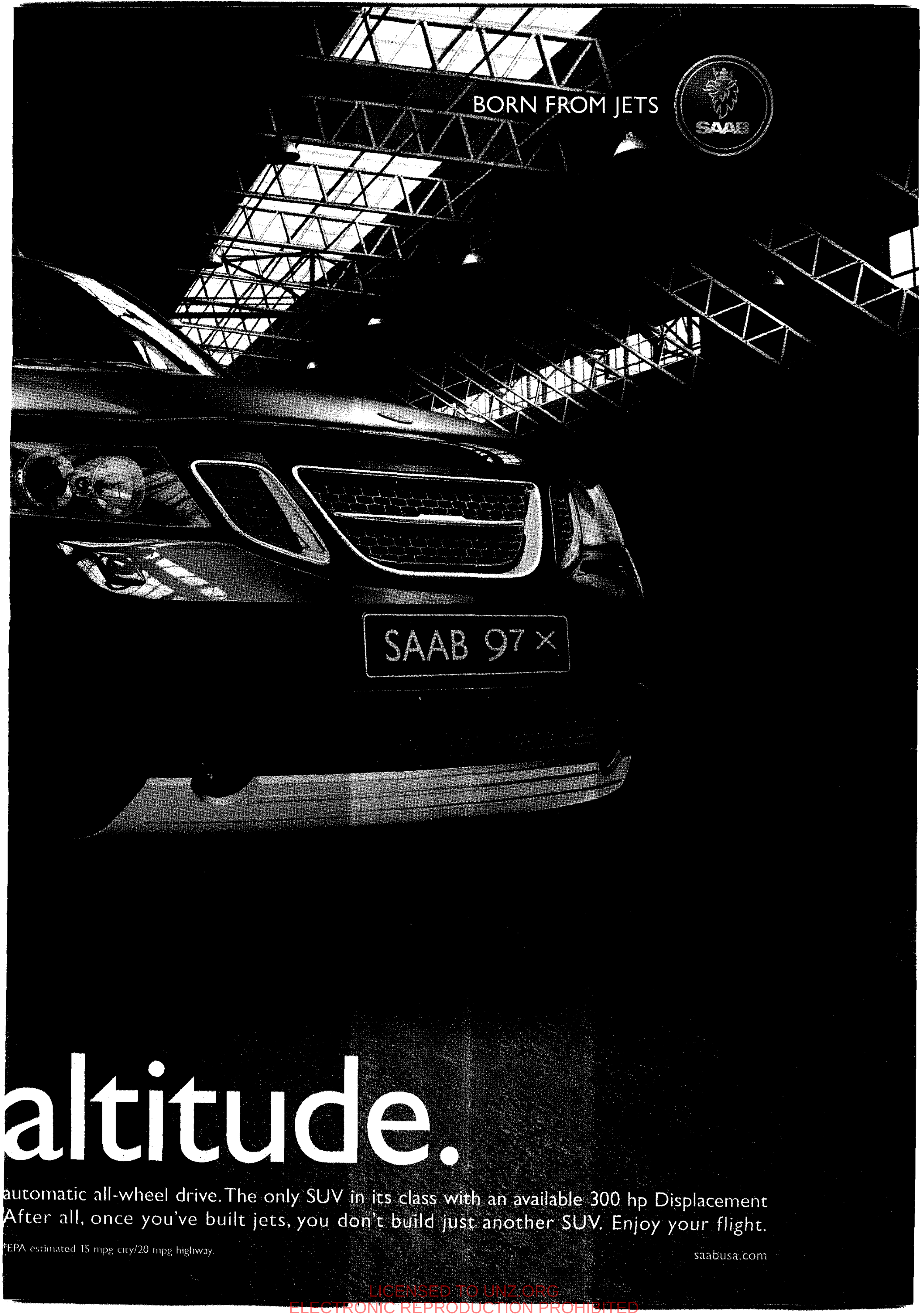

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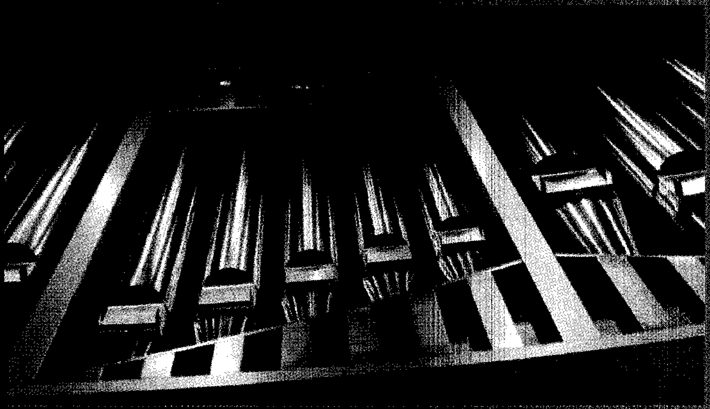

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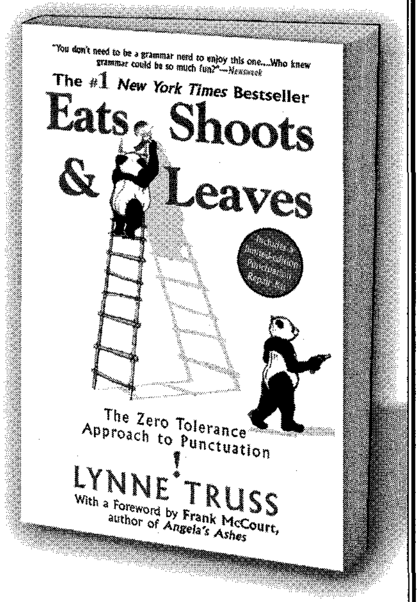
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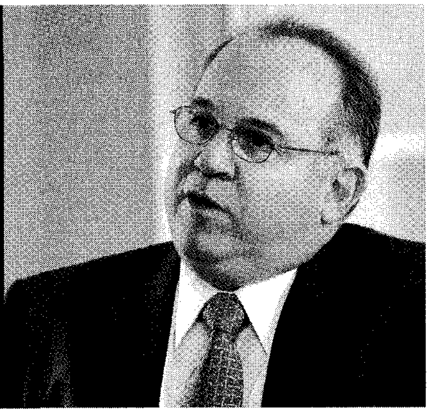
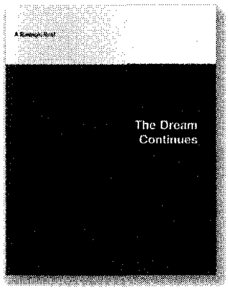


*Edward M. Kerschner, CFA*
*Chief Investment Officer*
*Citigroup Investment Research*

As many Baby Boomers approach traditional retirement age, investors are wondering how this will affect the market. We believe it will create opportunities. Boomers aren’t going to live the next act of their lives like their parents. That’s why our research department wrote *The Dream Continues*. This report details how Boomers’ aspirations and inspirations could affect companies and the market. It’s information no investor — even a Baby Boomer — should be without.



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# CONTRIBUTORS

Seymour M. Hersh ("The Iran Plans," p. 30) is the author of "Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib," which is available in paperback.

Cynthia Zarin ("Not Nice," p. 38) is a staff writer. Her new children's book, "Saints Among the Animals," illustrated by Leonid Gore, will be published in the fall.

Lauren Collins (The Talk of the Town, p. 27) is a member of the magazine's editorial staff.

Peter J. Boyer ("A Church Asunder," p. 54) has been a staff writer since 1992.

Richard Wilbur (Poem, p. 69) is a poet and translator. His "Collected Poems: 1943-2004" is out in paperback.

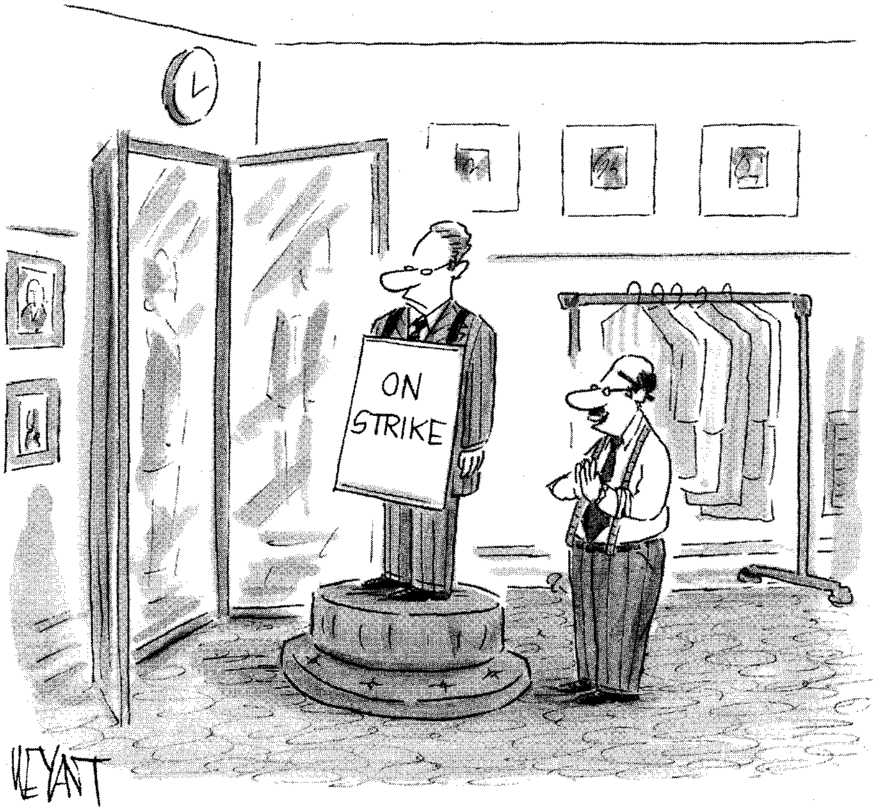
Alec Wilkinson ("The Protest Singer," p. 44) is a longtime contributor to the magazine.

Bernard MacLaverty (Fiction, p. 66) has published four novels and four collections of short stories. "Matters of Life & Death," his fifth collection, comes out in the fall.

John Lahr (A Critic at Large, p. 72; The Theatre, p. 84) is the magazine's senior drama critic. His book "Honky Tonk Parade: *New Yorker* Profiles of Show People" was published in October.

Adam Gopnik (Books, p. 80) is the author of "Paris to the Moon" and "The King in the Window."

Daniel Zalewski (Books, p. 82) is the magazine's features editor. ♦



*"This suit is more of a European cut."*

# THE MAIL

## HOW TO MAKE ABSINTHE

Jack Turner's piece on absinthe made slight mention of one of the most salient reasons that the green demon provides such a kick and has caused so many social problems—its very high alcohol content ("Green Gold," March 13th). In my liquor cabinet, I have one bottle of Bulgarian absinthe that is 170 proof, while my absinthe of choice—readily available in Copenhagen, by the way—is 136 proof and has been distilled by the owner of the east Copenhagen café Krut's Karport for many years.

*Thomas E. Kennedy*
*Copenhagen, Denmark*

Turner stops short of recognizing absinthe's modern version, pastis—the most popular drink in the South of France. In Provence, pastis is a way of life. While Paul Ricard, the father of pastis, was toying with his recipes in the nineteen-thirties, enterprising people (such as one of my uncles in Arles) made their own. At the time, the French government allowed vineyard owners to distill alcohol from the residue of the grapes used for making wine. The distilled product, called marc, was clear, more than 180 proof, and had to be doubled with water for human consumption. You then went to the pharmacy and, with a knowing smile, asked for some *dentifrice* (toothpaste). The understanding pharmacist would reach under the counter and hand you a packet of herbs and a small vial of anise. After macerating the herbs in the bottle of marc, you strained the now yellow-green liquid into a new bottle, the anise extract was added, and you had a bottle of safe, homemade absinthe.

*Jacques M. Gilly*
*Delray Beach, Fla.*

## ARTISTIC VALUES

Calvin Tomkins's otherwise engaging profile of Adam Weinberg is marred by a gratuitous and biting reference to my grandfather and great-uncle, the twentieth-century American social realists Raphael and Moses Soyer ("How American Is It?," March 13th). After touring a warehouse in which much of the Whitney Museum's permanent collection is stored, Tomkins observes that the museum amassed "endless dross" at a time when the Soyers "were considered important painters." The Whitney has long been criticized, as Tomkins appears to recognize, for being a slave to fashion. But the true measure of an artist, in the Soyers' time as in ours, is not whether the artist is "considered important" by the critics of the day but whether he or she produces good art. The work of the Soyers and their social-realist brethren stands up very well to that of the more "important" artists who followed.

*Joseph S. Lieber*
*Roslindale, Mass.*

## POLITICAL MISCALCULATIONS

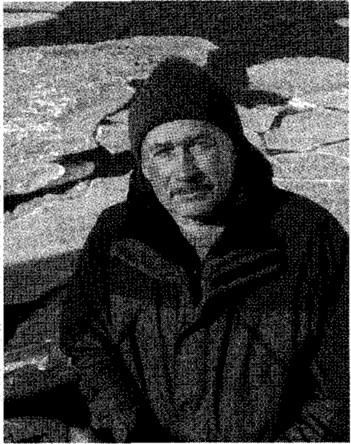
Hendrik Hertzberg, in defending the Democratic senators who left their colleague Russ Feingold and his motion to censure President Bush hanging in the wind, writes, "Tactical calculations . . . are never pleasant. But they are not always sordid, and sometimes they are necessary" (Comment, March 27th). But these same Democratic senators have been making "tactical calculations" for years, at the expense of their beliefs. Not only have their calculations proved seriously defective, leaving them with a smaller number of seats than they've had in decades; they have also alienated their loyal supporters. I have contributed to the Democratic Party for the past thirty years. This year, while the Democrats may get my vote, I've made a necessary tactical calculation: my checkbook will be off limits.

*Paul Coopersmith*
*Inverness, Calif.*

•

*Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.*

**The world is watching the Gray Whales of Sakhalin.**



**Alexander Rutenko is also listening.**

The feeding grounds of the endangered Western Gray Whales are close to Sakhalin II, one of the world's largest energy construction projects. So Dr Alexander Rutenko is monitoring underwater noise as part of a team of scientific experts working with Sakhalin Energy – a Shell-led joint venture – to minimize the project's impact on the whales. Find out more at **shell.com/alexander**

*Lynn Redgrave is starring in "The Importance of Being Earnest," opening at BAM. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.*

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |

## THIS WEEK

### THE THEATRE
### STRAWBERRY MAN

David Schwimmer stars in Herman Wouk's 1954 drama, "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial," based on his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "The Caine Mutiny," about a U.S. Navy captain who loses his grasp on reality and the support of his troops. Jerry Zaks directs. (See page 10.)

### NIGHT LIFE
### THE HIGHWAYMEN

Following on the heels of the Country Music Awards, which were held at Madison Square Garden last fall, the ad-hoc downtown group the Loser's Lounge gathers at Joe's Pub for a tribute to Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and Kris Kristofferson. (See page 12.)

### ART
### "MISERERE ET GUERRE"

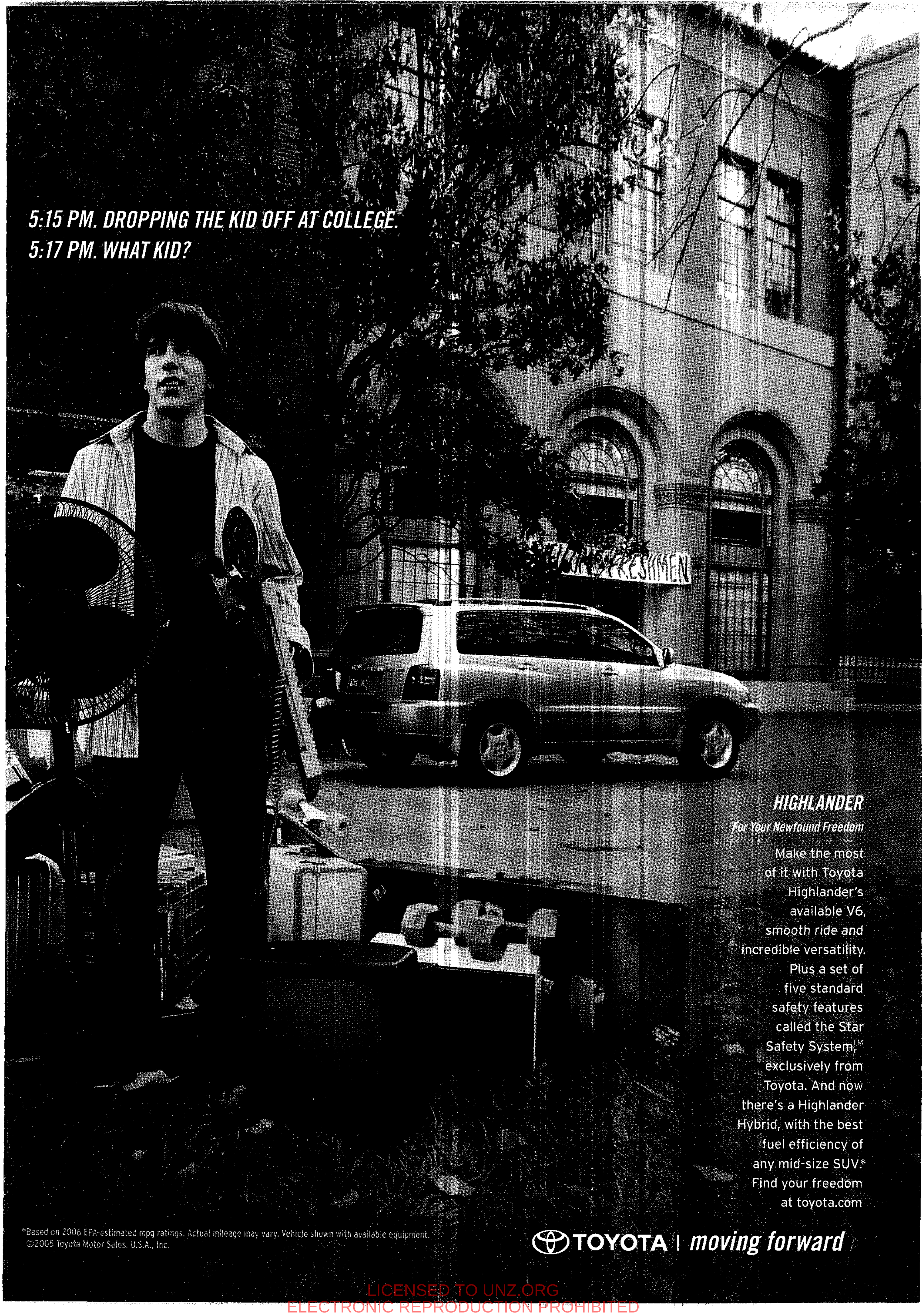
Georges Rouault (1871-1958) combined the roughened beauty of the Fauves and the immediacy of the Expressionists with strong colors and hard lines that recalled his early training in stained glass. The Museum of Biblical Art presents the complete album of fifty-eight prints that he made as a meditation on mercy and suffering. (See page 13.)

### CLASSICAL MUSIC
### SUNDAY BEST

A performance of Handel's oratorio "Solomon" by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at Alice Tully Hall, conducted by the supremely gifted René Jacobs, is one of several concerts of sacred music offered on Easter weekend. (See page 17.)

### MOVIES
### DOWN TO EARTH

There was no shortage of free-spirited Hollywood masterworks in the seventies, but Terrence Malick's "Days of Heaven," from 1978 and now at Film Forum, stands out among them. Malick's rhapsodic nature imagery was balanced by a tough sense of the material world and, above all, by drama: the triangle formed by Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, and Sam Shepard provides a nearly unbearable pang of romantic loss. At the time, Malick was only thirty-five; his next film came twenty years later. (See page 20.)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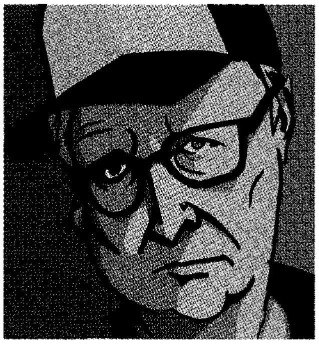
## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
## WORKING MAN

After a lifetime on Broadway and in Hollywood, the director Mike Nichols finally makes it to Off Broadway, as the lead producer of "On the Line," by Joe Roland, a play "rooted in working lives," at the Cherry Lane. "We hear about worker outsourcing and worker statistics, but we have seen very little about workers' insides," Nichols said. This is not the first time that Nichols has put his money where his heart is. In the seventies, when no one else would bring "Annie" to town, Nichols did, and it ran for 2,377 performances. "Doing it was a no-brainer," Nichols said. In the eighties, he produced Whoopi Goldberg's first one-woman show. Nichols was "startled and depressed," he said, to learn that his recent favorite Off Broadway show, "Bug," didn't turn a profit. "How could something thrill an audience for two years and just break even?" Still, he and his other producers have stumped up a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars to mount "On the Line." Given the bad economic odds, what's in it for him? "To see it and have them be seen," Nichols said. "To get scared with them."

—*John Lahr*



JASHAR AWAN

## THE THEATRE
## OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.*

**AWAKE AND SING!**
Clifford Odets's 1935 drama focusses on a Jewish family in the Bronx during the Depression. Starring Lauren Ambrose, Ben Gazzara, Mark Ruffalo, and Zoë Wanamaker. In previews. Opens April 17. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE CAINE MUTINY COURT-MARTIAL**
David Schwimmer stars in a revival of Herman Wouk's 1954 play, based on his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, about a naval lieutenant on trial for mutiny during the Second World War. Jerry Zaks directs. Previews begin April 14. (Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE DROWSY CHAPERONE**
A new meta-musical, about a theatre fan in a reverie over his favorite musical, starring Bob Martin and Sutton Foster. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.)

**FAITH HEALER**
Ralph Fiennes, Cherry Jones, and Ian McDiarmid star in a revival of Brian Friel's 1979 play, about a man with a gift for healing, his long-suffering wife, and his loyal manager. Jonathan Kent directs. Previews begin April 18. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE HISTORY BOYS**
Nicholas Hytner directs Alan Bennett's tale of unruly British prep schoolers and the ideologically opposed teachers responsible for their tutelage. Previews begin April 14. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**
Lynn Redgrave stars as Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde's play, in a Theatre Royal Bath/Peter Hall Company production. Sir Peter Hall directs. Opens April 18. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)

**J.A.P. CHRONICLES, THE MUSICAL**
Written and composed by Isabel Rose, who also stars, this musical, based on Rose's novel, is about six former bunkmates at a camp reunion. Previews begin April 17. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 212-868-4444.)

**LESTAT**
The new musical based on Anne Rice's "Vampire Chronicles" features music by Elton John and lyrics by Bernie Taupin. In previews. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

**THE MISTAKES MADELINE MADE**
Naked Angels presents a new comedy by Elizabeth Meriwether ("Heddatron"), directed by Evan Cabnet, about a young personal assistant with a fear of bathing and a penchant for bad poets. Previews begin April 15. (45 Below, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-868-4444.)

**PEER GYNT**
A National Theatre of Bergen and Norwegian Theatre of Oslo co-production of Henrik Ibsen's play, about the follies of a farmer's arrogant son. Robert Wilson directs. In Norwegian with English supertitles. April 11-16. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100.)

**STUFF HAPPENS**
David Hare's drama about the Iraq war has its New York première at the Public. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. In previews. Opens April 13. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

**TARZAN**
Disney's version of Edgar Rice Burroughs's classic story comes to Broadway. With a book by David Henry Hwang and music by Phil Collins. Bob Crowley directs. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.)

**THREE DAYS OF RAIN**
Julia Roberts, Paul Rudd, and Bradley Cooper star in a revival of Richard Greenberg's drama about siblings who unearth secrets about their late father. In previews. (Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE THREEPENNY OPERA**
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents the operetta by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, adapted by Wallace Shawn. Starring Alan Cumming, Cyndi Lauper, and Nellie McKay. Scott Elliott directs. In previews. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

**THE WEDDING SINGER**
A musical based on the 1998 movie, about a wedding singer who falls in love with a bride-to-be in New Jersey in the eighties. John Rando directs. In previews. (Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

## NOW PLAYING

**BASED ON A TOTALLY TRUE STORY**
Manhattan Theatre Club presents a new play by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, about a young comic-book writer on the verge of fame. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

**LOS BIG NAMES**
Marga Gomez stars in a one-woman show about her Latin family's show-business adventures in New York in the sixties and in Hollywood in the nineties. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE CATARACT**
Dinah (Vanessa Aspillaga) and Dan (Tug Coker), two high-spirited Southerners who have wandered up the Mississippi in search of sustenance and new beginnings, arrive at the doorstep of an uptight married couple, Cyrus (Barnaby Carpenter) and Lottie (Kelly McAndrew), in Minneapolis in 1883. Lisa D'Amour's play, which attempts to incorporate several disparate themes—women's place in the world, mysticism, homosexuality—fails to come to any coherent dénouement. Yet the intelligent staging and direction of Katie Pearl, who guides the excellent actors toward riveting moments of wry brilliance, keeps the confused play afloat. (Julia Miles, 424 W. 55th St. 212-239-6200. Through April 15.)

**FESTEN**
The American première of a play by David Eldridge, adapted from the 1998 Dogme film "The Celebration," starring Larry Bryggman, Jeremy Sisto, Michael Hayden, Ali MacGraw, and Julianna Margulies. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE GOD COMMITTEE**
One of the few striking things about Mark St. Germain's corny new dramedy, about the tensions within a Catholic hospital's committee of doctors and personnel—who together must determine which of three critically ill patients will receive the only available heart for transplant—is the scene in the theatre's lobby. Here, representatives from the New York Organ Donor Network (which helped finance this production) have set up educational tables for anyone who decides, on the spot, to register as an organ donor. This may be the one and only way in which "The God Committee" could be said to grab at the heart; there's little in the play's sententious dialogue, splintery subplots, and perfunctory delivery to quicken anyone's pulse. Kevin Moriarty directs. (Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

**GUARDIANS**
This play by Peter Morris, about scandals of the Iraq war, stars Katherine Moennig ("The L Word") and Lee Pace. (Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

**A JEW GROWS IN BROOKLYN**
An autobiographical musical comedy about the family of the playwright Jake Ehrenreich (who also stars). (American Theatre of Actors, 314 W. 54th St. 212-352-3101.)

**LANDSCAPE OF THE BODY**
Signature Theatre Company presents a play by John Guare, set in nineteen-seventies Greenwich Village, starring Lili Taylor and Sherie Rene Scott. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-352-3101.)

**MEN OF CLAY**
A new drama written and directed by Jeff Cohen, about four middle-aged Jewish tennis buffs trying to find their place in Baltimore in the seventies. (June Havoc, 312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444.)

**A NIGHT IN NOVEMBER**
A comedy by the Tony-nominated writer Marie Jones, about the enlightenment of a Belfast Protestant. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 212-868-4444. Through April 16.)

**ON THE LINE**
Mike Nichols produced this new play by Joe Roland, about three lifelong friends who clash when a

strike disrupts their factory jobs, at the newly renovated Cherry Lane Theatre. (38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.)

**PEN**
The drama in David Marshall Grant's new play (directed by Will Frears, at Playwrights Horizons) turns on the eponymous pen, which the controlling, pessimistic, wheelchair-bound Helen Bayer (the excellent J. Smith-Cameron), who suffers from multiple sclerosis, uses to write while lying down. Her dutiful, gawky son, Matt (Dan McCabe), who has a little problem with kleptomania, has stolen it to fill out his application to a university thousands of miles from his toxic, symbiotic arrangement with his divorced mother. Matt's upbeat father, Jerry (well played by Reed Birney), keeps reminding Matt that he's not responsible for his mother. The observations are astute; the execution, however, isn't satisfying. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/10/06.) (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

**A SAFE HARBOR FOR ELIZABETH BISHOP**
Marta Góes's new play (a Primary Stages production, under the crisp direction of Richard Jay-Alexander), a one-woman show starring Amy Irving, tells the story of Elizabeth Bishop's years in Brazil, where she lived with her aristocratic lover, Lota de Macedo Soares, from 1951 to 1967. "Safe Harbor" dramatizes Bishop in reaction—to Brazil, to Brazilian society, to the exotic flora and fauna around her, and, of course, to her turbulent lover, who killed herself in 1967. Luckily, Irving, who is at once centered and vulnerable, manages to make Bishop's intelligence and restraint believable. She parses the flat script with fresh response and acts the poems with deft simplicity. (4/10/06) (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

**SANDRA BERNHARD: EVERYTHING BAD AND BEAUTIFUL**
The audacious comedian has a new show. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Daryl Roth, 101 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

**SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL**
Patricia MacLachlan's Newbery Medal-winning novel has been translated into a modest and likable musical for young audiences—with an unusual capacity to please parents as well. The story revolves around a robust, unconventional Maine woman, Sarah (played zestfully by Becca Ayers), who travels all the way to Kansas to meet a widowed farmer, Jacob (Herndon Lackey), in hopes of someday becoming his wife. The spirited Sarah is willing to give prairie life a whirl, but first she must win the hearts of Jacob and his skeptical teenage daughter (Kate Wetherhead), both of whom judge her to be deficient in feminine grace. The composer Laurence O'Keefe and the lyricist Nell Benjamin wrote the musical's pithy, hummable songs for a jazz trio. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

**SHOW PEOPLE**
In this jolly, well-turned romp, two old troupers (the expert Lawrence Pressman and Debra Monk) are hired to pose for a weekend as the parents of a quirky young tycoon (Ty Burrell), who is about to pop the question to his fiancée (the droll Judy Greer). As it turns out, they aren't the only ones doing the performing. Paul Weitz's new play (directed by Peter Askin) is an affectionate examination of artifice, acting, and the state of the profession with some damned-good farcical twists. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

**TRYST**
A romantic thriller by Karoline Leach. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

**WELL**
Lisa Kron's cunningly written and compelling play, a Pirandello-like examination of chronic illness, moves to Broadway, after a 2004 run at the Public. Kron describes it as "a solo show with some other people in it," one of which is her sick, obese, complaining but beloved mother, Ann (the superb Jayne Houdyshell), whom she both berates and allows to hijack the play. Disagreements between Kron's authorial voice and her characters lend a sense of both modesty and accuracy to Kron's personal history. Directed by Leigh Silverman. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

## *Also Playing*

**BACK OF THE THROAT:** Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101. **ENTERTAINING MR. SLOANE:** Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300. **GEORGE M.**

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**COHAN TONIGHT!:** Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **GREY GARDENS:** Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. **JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN PARIS:** Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-239-6200. **THE PAJAMA GAME:** American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. **RED LIGHT WINTER:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **SWEENEY TODD:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

## NIGHT LIFE

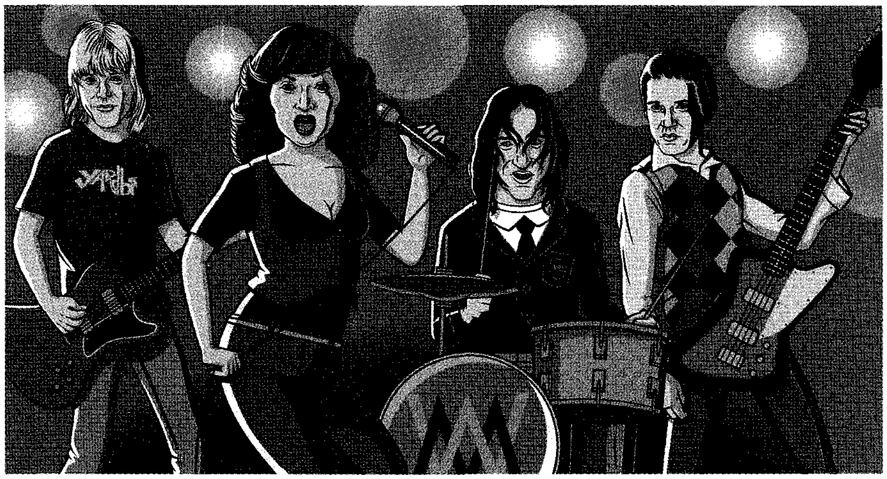
## ROCK AND POP

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

**BARBÈS**
376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—April 13: **Las Rubias del Norte** rearrange Latin big-band music for a handful of instruments, including the glockenspiel. The group is small, but its sound and passion are anything but.

**B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL**
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—April 15: Great balls of fire! **Jerry Lee Lewis** is still with us.

**BOWERY BALLROOM**
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—April 12: **Mates of State,** a husband-and-wife group from San Francisco, serve up shimmering pop confections. Kori Gardner (organ and vocals) and Jason Hammel (drums and vocals) have a charming "play anywhere, anytime" approach, and their whimsical songs are suitable for long road trips, dance marathons, and any number of late-night activities. April 14-15: The celebrated indie-rock group **Clap Your Hands Say Yeah.** April 18: The maverick post-rock alchemists **TV on the Radio.**



*Morningwood opens for the Sounds at Irving Plaza on April 12.*

MICHAEL WELDON

**BROOKLYN FIRE PROOF**
101 Richardson St., Williamsburg (718-302-4702)—April 12: This intimate second-floor gallery and performance space, situated above a hospital-supply warehouse, presents **Half-Handed Cloud,** a.k.a. John Ringhofer, a multi-instrumentalist from Berkeley, California, where he is the custodian of a church. When he's not performing as H.H.C., Ringhofer is the trombonist for Sufjan Stevens, and, like that folksy troubadour, Ringhofer is a Christian musician. H.H.C. plays an Omnichord (an obsolete eighties-era synthesizer), sings in a chirpy voice, and keeps his sermons brief (his songs rarely last beyond two minutes). With **Justin Vollmar,** a tender-voiced preacher's son from Bloomington, Indiana.

**HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM**
Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (212-307-7171)—April 13-14: A hipster's dream night out, with the double bill of **Death Cab for Cutie** and **Franz Ferdinand,** two bands that are well on their way to the big time. Death Cab's plangent dream pop and Franz Ferdinand's jerky dance rock will insure that both the shy and the outgoing kids will be all right, to paraphrase a classic-rock anthem that their parents might be familiar with.

**IRVING PLAZA**
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—April 12: The **Sounds,** from Sweden, make crystalline dance music that's one part rock, one part Euro-pop, and arena-ready through and through. Fronted by the icy blonde Maja Ivarsson, the group delivers it all with a sexy punch. The local outfit **Morningwood** opens. Made up of ex-members of Spacehog and Cibo Matto, the band qualifies as an indie-rock supergroup, but that's not what has folks, er, excited, about this garage-rock outfit. The lead singer, Chantal Claret, is the draw; she puts a whole world of meaning into songs like "Easy," "Babysitter," and "Take Off Your Clothes." Warning to those in the front row: during performances of that last song, she likes to make an example of at least one fan. April 13: The Pennsylvania punk rockers **Anti-Flag** use their new album, "For Blood and Empire," to complain in earnest about the current political climate. Some of their fans, however, have complaints of their own: the band recently signed with a major label, which is a huge taboo. April 14: **UB40,** the British band that made Neil Diamond's "Red Red Wine" a reggae staple, returns for the first time in seven years. April 15: The au-courant synth pop of **Ladytron.**

**JOE'S PUB**
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—April 13-15: The **Loser's Lounge,** the fearless group of pop-cultural archeologists led by the keyboardist Joe McGinty, sifts through the collected songs of Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, and Waylon Jennings. The Losers have named this run "The Highwaymen," after the eighties group featuring all four musicians, but the shows will include works from each of the country-music icons' solo careers. April 17: The artist **Ben Katchor** and the musician **Mark Mulcahy** present "The Rosenbach Company," a wholly original piece of musical theatre that uses drawings and songs to tell the story of two brothers, Dr. A. S. W. and Philip Rosenbach. The two were leading collectors of books and decorative-art objects in the first half of the twentieth century, and their home in Philadelphia, which is now a museum, includes a bookcase that once belonged to Herman Melville, manuscripts for Joyce's "Ulysses" and Conrad's "Lord Jim," and thousands of drawings by the children's-book author Maurice Sendak. April 18: The exceptional singer-songwriter **Jules Shear** continues his foray into the world of good love gone bad on his latest CD, "Dreams Don't Count."

**NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**
2 W. 64th St. (212-874-5210)—April 15: The **Cowboy Junkies** remain a beloved and influential force in the alternative-country community thanks to their penchant for languid atmospherics and the smoky delivery of their lead singer, Margo Timmins.

**NORTHSIX**
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—April 12: The **Wilderness,** from Baltimore, Maryland, likes to experiment and lay waste to rock norms, but what really sets the foursome apart is the wail of the front man, James Johnson. It falls somewhere between Japanese opera, vintage John Lydon, and the bellow of a drunken sailor.

**ROCKWOOD MUSIC HALL**
196 Allen St. (212-477-4155)—April 18: **Mudville.** There's post-rock, post-punk, and now, post-trip-hop. In the hands of the smoldering vocalist Marilyn Carino and the producer, bassist, and multi-instrumentalist Ben Rubin, down-tempo beats, haunted-matinée-style organ playing, and electronic flourishes coalesce into something familiar yet wholly unique.

**ROSE THEATRE**
Broadway at 60th St. (212-721-6500)—April 14: **Chris** and **Rich Robinson,** of the Black Crowes, are touring under the name Brothers of a Feather, performing acoustic renditions of their back catalogue. (See Town Hall and Warsaw.)

**TOWN HALL**
123 W. 43rd St. (212-840-2824)—April 14: **Ralph Stanley** and the **Clinch Mountain Boys.** The banjo picker Stanley gathers his band members from small towns in the mountains of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, and hits the road, bringing the nation top-shelf bluegrass. April 15: **Chris** and **Rich Robinson.** (See Rose Theatre.)

**WARSAW**
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-0505)—April 12: The surrealistic punk-cabaret band **Gogol Bordello,** led by the sallow-faced, darkly charismatic Eugene Hutz. April 13: **Chris** and **Rich Robinson.** (See Rose Theatre.)

**WEBSTER HALL**
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—April 13: **Rhett Miller,** on leave from his barn-burning alt-country outfit Old 97's, stops by with songs from his latest solo release, "The Believer." April 15: The gritty Texan singer-songwriter **Robert Earl Keen.**

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**ALGONQUIN HOTEL**
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through May 13: The chanteuse **Karen Akers** focusses on the songwriting team of John Kander and Fred Ebb, the men who assured us that life is a cabaret.

**BLUE NOTE**
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—April 11-16: **Chick Corea's** latest trio, Forever Returns, includes **Airto Moreira** and **Eddie Gomez** and hearkens back to his seventies fusion juggernaut, Return to Forever. Of his sidemen here, only the percussionist Moreira was in the original band, but the bassist Gomez is a formidable player and a periodic associate of Corea's, and an intriguing look backwards is promised.

**CARLYLE HOTEL**
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—**Mary Cleere Haran,** a great performer who mixes barbed comic observation with genuine scholarly enthusiasm for the creators of the Great American Songbook, takes over the Café Carlyle through April 29.

**DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA**
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—April 11-16: The bebop saxophonist **Charles McPherson** and the trumpeter **Tom Harrell** unite to honor Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, backed by a rhythm section perfectly suited to the job: the pianist **Ronnie Mathews,** the bassist **Ray Drummond,** and the drummer **Jimmy Cobb.**

**IRIDIUM**
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—April 13-16: Neo-fusion from three pioneers of the genre, the guitarist **Larry Coryell,** the drummer **Lenny White,** and the former Weather Report bassist, **Victor Bailey.** Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

**JAZZ STANDARD**
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—April 12-16: The pianist **Billy Childs,** once a reliable sideman for Freddie Hubbard and others, has evolved into an ambitious bandleader and composer with a penchant for classically informed chamber jazz.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—April 11-16: **Billy Hart,** a venerable drummer who

has played with Wes Montgomery, Miles Davis, and other legends, fills his quartet with gifted younger players, including the saxophonist **Mark Turner** and the pianist **Ethan Iverson** (from the Bad Plus). The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

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## ART
## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and forgotten items from the Met's storerooms meet in what Kara Walker calls "the story of Muck." This sad and delicate show, titled **"After the Deluge,"** mixes Walker's own gruesomely satirical silhouettes, gouaches, and writings with a range of historical works to produce a meditation on death by water and the indelible stain of American racial obsessions. Among the archival entries are an off-kilter copy of John Singleton Copley's "Watson and the Shark," a nineteenth-century Kongo *nkisi*, or "power figure," studded with nails, a sentimental Winslow Homer portrait of carnival revellers, and a sampler of period silhouettes only slightly less bizarre than Walker's. Through July 30. ♦ A major retrospective, co-organized with the British Museum, reviews the work of the Romantic-era landscape painter Samuel Palmer (1805-81). Palmer derived his Romantic and quintessentially English vision of landscape in part from the work of his friend and mentor William Blake. But his mighty oaks and moonlit fields evince an earthy naturalism more akin to Wordsworth's—and, looking at these comfortable farms lit by startling daubs of color and gnarled forests bursting with sylvan personality, one might wish, anachronistically, that he could have illustrated Tolkien. **"Samuel Palmer: Vision and Landscape"** includes some one hundred oils, watercolors, drawings, and etchings, along with illustrated letters, sketchbooks, and a sampler of works by artists in Palmer's influential circle. Through May 29. ♦ **"A Taste for Opulence: Sèvres Porcelain from the Collection."** Through Aug. 13. ♦ **"Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh."** Through July 9. ♦ **"The Fabric of Life: Ikat Textiles of Indonesia."** Through Sept. 24. ♦ **"Warriors of the Himalayas: Rediscovering the Arms and Armor of Tibet."** Through July 2. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Edvard Munch: The Modern Life of the Soul"** is the first American museum retrospective of the Norwegian artist (1863-1944) in thirty years. Through May 8. ♦ In **"Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking,"** artists from Islamic backgrounds examine their cultures and homelands, mostly from afar. Unexpectedly, perhaps, women reign. Included are works by Mona Hatoum, Shirin Neshat, Ghada Amer, Shahzia Sikander, Shirazeh Houshiary, Emily Jacir, and Marjane Satrapi. Through May 22. ♦ The retrospective **"John Szarkowski: Photographs"** presents work by the critic and curator (he worked at MOMA for almost thirty years), from Midwestern scenes of the nineteen-forties through a 2002 shot taken in upstate New York. Through May 15. ♦ **"On-Site: New Architecture in Spain."** Through May 1. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"David Smith: A Centennial."** Smith (1906-65) parlayed his experiences as a welder, an employee of the Studebaker company, a painter, and an acolyte of the Cubist movement into tremendous steel sculptures that were championed by Clement Greenberg and have become emblems of American modernism. Through May 14. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—Philippe Vergne and Chrissie Iles curated **"Day for Night,"** the 2006 Biennial. More than a hundred artists are represented, including Pierre Huyghe and Troy Brauntuch. Through May 28. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART**
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"William Wegman: Funney/Strange."** This major retrospective goes beyond clever, anthropomorphic photographs of Weimaraners (though those are here, too) with forty years of the artist's paintings, drawings, videos, and films. Through May 28. ♦ **"Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson."** Through Aug. 13. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Darwin"** traces the discoveries and influence of the great naturalist (1809-82) with, among other things, a re-creation of his study, samples of fossils he collected, and live specimens of tortoises, frogs, and iguanas like those that he encountered in the Galápagos Islands. Through Aug. 20. ♦ **"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter"** is back for the eighth year. Through May 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

**ASIA SOCIETY**
Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Asia Society, which celebrates the occasion with **"A Passion for Asia: The Rockefeller Family Collects,"** a show honoring its patrons. Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

**DAHESH MUSEUM OF ART**
580 Madison Ave., at 57th St. (212-759-0606)—**"Stories to Tell: Masterworks from the Kelly Collection of American Illustration."** Through May 21. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**DRAWING CENTER**
35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166)—The spring "Selections" show turns the Drawing Room project space into a screening room for **"Analog Animations."** Through April 15. ♦ **"Joëlle Tuerlinckx: Drawing Inventory."** Through April 22. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

**FRICK COLLECTION**
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"Goya's Last Works."** Through May 14. ♦ The Frick is effecting a rare reunion of the five large-scale allegorical paintings by Paolo Veronese (c. 1528-88) currently in American museums. Two already reside at the Frick; the others will travel from the Met and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Through July 16. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5. The Goya exhibition galleries will stay open until 8 on Friday evenings for the duration of the show.)

**INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY**
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography."** Through May 28. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 10 to 6, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

**MUSEO DEL BARRIO**
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-831-7272)—**"Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Early Impressions."** Through May 21. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

**MUSEUM OF BIBLICAL ART**
Broadway at 61st St. (212-408-1500)—**"This Anguished World of Shadows: Georges Rouault's Miserere et Guerre."** Through May 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

**MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**
Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (212-534-1672)—**"Transformed by Light: The New York Night,"** an exhibition that considers the impact of electrical lights on city life, whether in office buildings or homes, in neon signs or on the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. Through May 7. ♦ **"Timescapes"** compresses four hundred years of New York City history into a twenty-two-minute presentation of morphing maps and archival photographs. It's an absorbing biography of the metropolis, neatly organized into chapters that outline the city's explosion out into its five boroughs, up into skyscrapers, and down into the subway system. Ongoing. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

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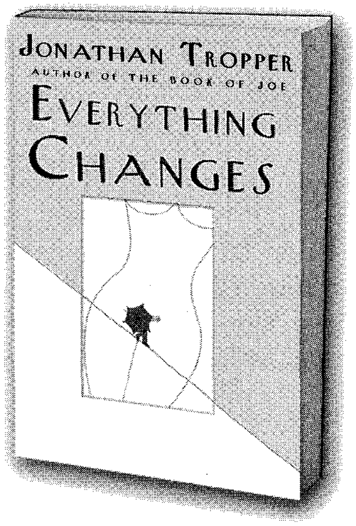

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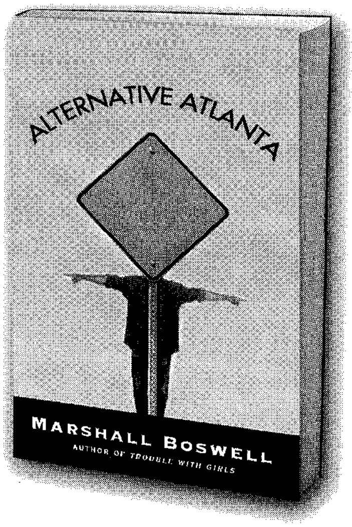

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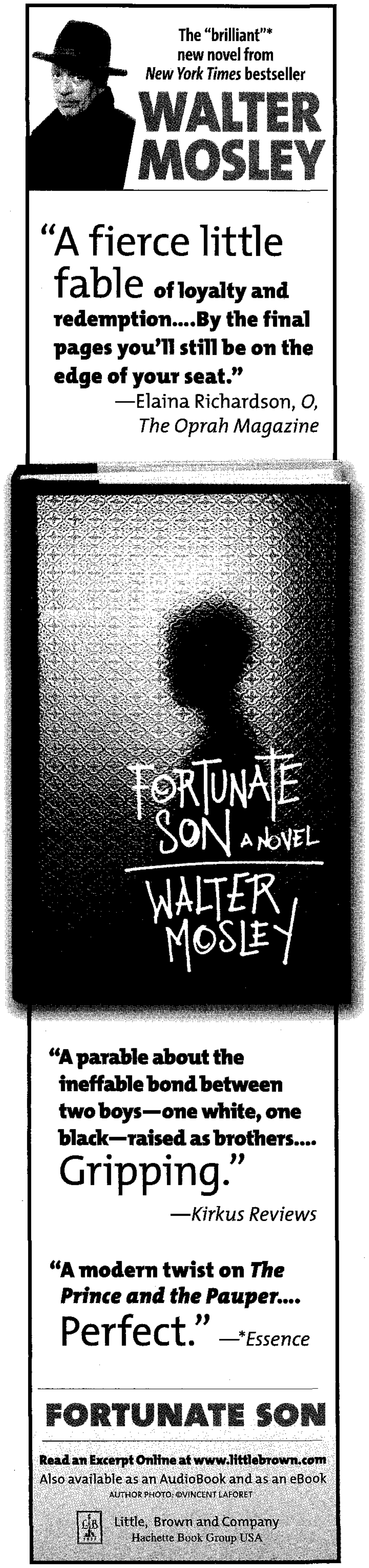

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**NEUE GALERIE**
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—"Klee in America." Through May 22. (Open Thursdays, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.*

**DANNY LYON**
Fifty-eight vintage photographs, made between 1963 and 2005, provide a meaty overview of this maverick artist's wide-ranging career. With a reporter's instincts and an activist's dedication, Lyon immersed himself in projects about the civil-rights movement, a Midwestern motorcycle gang, and prison farms. Previously unpublished and unexhibited photos from those series hang alongside pictures of Tennessee carnival workers, Texan drag queens, his younger self, and his family, in a show that makes a solid case for Lyon as the natural heir of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Through April 22. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-750-7070.)

### *Short List*

**PETER BEGLEY:** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 212-879-6606. Through April 22. **PIERRE HUYGHE:** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160. Through April 15. **SALLY MANN:** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313. Through April 22. **FRANCIS PICABIA:** Michael Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Through April 15. **EDWARD SOREL:** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. 212-838-0333. Through April 22. **CARL VAN VECHTEN:** Cummins, 699 Madison Ave., at 62nd St. 212-688-6441. Through May 6. **TOM WESSELMANN:** L & M, 45 E. 78th St. 212-861-0020. Through April 15. **FRED WILSON:** PaceWildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292. Through April 15. **"STILL LIFE":** De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 212-327-1482. Through April 15.

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

**YI CHEN**
In Chen's fantastical portraits, facial features painted with Old Master precision slew around to the wrong places on bulbous heads, which are themselves attached like growths to slinky, boneless figures. Against chic backgrounds of cool yellow overlaid with panels of pale blue or lavender, the handsome/monstrous characters sport avant-designer threads like a leopard coat with matching bra, or a leather aviator's helmet. Such touches, along with the figures' bee-stung lips and kohl-rimmed eyes, make obvious Chen's debt to—and criticism of, and enthrallment with—fashion photography. Actual magazine collages displayed in the back room thus literalize the paintings unnecessarily. Through April 15. (Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.)

**TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK**
Sinister vegans, intestines with nipples that turn into thumbs, and a viscous bubblegum-pink substance unappetizingly named "mind meat" feature prominently in Hancock's installation, which is titled "In the Blestian Room." Hancock's paintings are whizbang affairs of kaleidoscopic color, cartoony drawing, and scrawled, enigmatic phrases. His drawings are more controlled, some being actual panels for more or less narrative cartoons. The walls are also drawn upon floor to ceiling with messy, repeating, all-caps phrases like "IN THE BLESTIAN ROOM MIRACLES ARE MACHINED." Industrious, cracky. Through April 15. (James Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500.)

**DANIEL JOHNSTON**
Just this side of official outsider art, Johnston's drawings, Super-8 films, and tinkly tunes possess all the naïveté and navel-gazing introspection that indie rockers expect from their heroes. And if the gallery guestbook is any indication, they've come in droves, particularly from Johnston's home state of Texas, to pay homage. Sixty drawings, mostly in marker and ballpoint pen, executed on the backs of business stationery and in notebooks, display Johnston's lexicon of comic-book heroes and antiheroes. Some are derived from popular sources, like Captain America and Casper the Friendly Ghost. Others recall R. Crumb and Raymond Pettibon, although next to Johnston and his daffy musings, Pettibon—another artist of the naïf-

## TABLES FOR TWO
### LODGE

318 Grand St., at Havemeyer St., Brooklyn (718-486-9400)—Before opening Lodge, Daniel Cipriani spent his days as a set designer, contriving fake Red Lobsters, Taco Bells, and Olive Gardens for TV ads. The experience, he says, instilled in him a distaste for theme-restaurant kitsch. So what's with the selection of canned beers, the barman in a plaid shirt, and the antler chandeliers? And how about that photograph of a lumberjackish guy with a gun, hanging over the cash register? Actually, the seemingly ersatz country boy is the caretaker of some land Cipriani has upstate, which serves as the inspiration for the restaurant's neo-rustic feel. "We wanted it to be a cross between a cabin and an homage to Frank Lloyd Wright," Cipriani said. So there are fieldstone columns amidst cedar walls, sleek utensils alongside chipped china, hanging plants mixed in with sprays of wildflowers. If the Brady Bunch had had a house in the Adirondacks, it might have looked a lot like Lodge.

The food, unfortunately, is closer to summer camp. While the avocado salad is pleasing enough, an appetizer of tiger shrimp is drowning in dill sauce, and the apple-cheddar fritters are pulpy and bland. It's good to see fried chicken on a menu, especially with a tangy batter; if only the accompanying kale and mashed potatoes (which had the consistency of grits) came hot, or at least warm. The turkey meat loaf is served with a salad of tomatoes and onions that amounts to a ketchupy slop. One starts to wonder if the beer is the only thing that comes in a can.

Two of Lodge's most redeeming elements are handmade: the delicious maple-syrup gelato, from Ciao Bella, and a pair of gorgeous tables that Cipriani hewed from slabs of oak. The artisanal, do-it-yourself spirit of the place can be contagious. The other night, a man with a Mohawk was celebrating his birthday, and the waitress delivered a cake that his friends had brought—a larger-than-life rendering of the male anatomy. A few naturalistic touches didn't prevent anyone from digging in. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $6-$14.)

—*Lauren Collins*

drawings-and-text school—looks like Wittgenstein. Through April 15. (Clementine, 623 W. 27th St. 212-243-5937.)

**JUDITH LINHARES**
If Linhares's paintings look familiar, it's because they bear more than a passing resemblance to the canvases of Dana Schutz, the prodigy (she was born in 1976) whose work hangs everywhere these days, including MOMA's contemporary galleries. Linhares is the progenitor in the equation, however, since her stiff-limbed figures, painted in bright Easter-egg hues, predate Schutz's hallucinogenic confections by nearly two decades. Her subjects are also gentler and sweeter. In these recent works, nude women bask in the moonlight or roast marshmallows in a clearing, or commune with a fairy godmother dressed in yellow. There are also plenty of big, floppy, friendly-looking animals and a room devoted to floral still-lifes—perfect subjects for a show titled "Rowing in Eden." Through April 22. (Thorp, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-691-6565.)

**SCOTT PETERMAN**
Peterman's handsome, large-scale photographs of landscapes include moss-covered tundra in Iceland, the twisted folds of black lava flows in Hawaii, and what look like off-road earthworks in Death Valley. But his most arresting images are aerial shots of densely packed cities where the only trace of the natural world is a blank, hazy sky. When even the horizon line is missing from several views of São Paulo, the metropolis looks miniaturized and unreal, like a fantastically detailed architect's tabletop model. From a vantage point high over the rooftops of one suburb of Mexico City, identical row houses stretch as far as the eye can see: an infinity of conformity. Through April 22. (Silverstein, 535 W. 24th St. 212-627-3930.)

**FRANK THIEL**
This German photographer's monumental pictures of peeling paint and scarred plaster have far more modest and eloquent precedents in the nineteen-forties photographs that Aaron Siskind made in the spirit of his Abstract Expressionist peers. Thiel, who focussed on the walls of abandoned industrial buildings in East Berlin, can't improve on Siskind's mastery, but he has a similar feel for the weathered beauty of ruins. And even though his found abstractions rarely earn their bombastic scale, and though his color palette—pink scaling to cream, ivory over pale blue, chalk white on white—flirts shamelessly with pure decoration, he knows how to make a muscular, knockout impression. Through April 15. (Sean Kelly, 528 W. 29th St. 212-239-1181.)

**TATIANA TROUVÉ / SUSAN JENNINGS**
Trouvé's "Intranquility" stages a funny little psychodrama in the gallery's small room, the props of which include miniature sawhorses, baby-sized crutches, an elaborate wooden handrail at less than midget height, and an alarming yet jolly pile of rubber and metal studded with jingle bells. There is also a small door opening onto an unexplained bright light, and huge skeins of bilious yellow twine. In a different emotional register altogether are Jennings's photographs, photograms, and video fragments, gathered under the title "Strange Liberty." These concern dazzled perception of pretty mundanities, such as sparks flying upward, a chandelier twinkling, and the splayed silhouettes of curly, straight, and dreadlocked hair. Through April 15. (Steinberg, 526 W. 26th St. 212-924-5770.)

### *Short List*

**FIONA BANNER:** Printed Matter, 195 Tenth Ave. 212-925-0325. Through April 15. **PHIL COLLINS:** Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144. Through April 15. **TARA DONOVAN:** PaceWildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-929-7000. Through April 22. **BRIAN JUNGEN:** Kaplan, 525 W. 21st St. 212-645-7335. Through April 15. **MARTIN PARR:** Danziger, 521 W. 26th St. 212-629-6778. Through April 15. **FAIRFIELD PORTER:** Cuningham, 541 W. 25th St. 212-242-2772. Through April 15. **PAOLO VENTURA:** Hasted Hunt, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-0006. Opens April 13. **"THE TRACE OF A TRACE":** Rubenstein, 527 W. 23rd St. 212-627-8000. Through April 15.

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

**EUGENE ANDOLSEK**
Andolsek is a retired railroad clerk and self-taught artist whose intricate black patterns, filled in with sherbety home-mixed inks, suggest either psychedelic art or close study of the stamp collection he amassed throughout his life. His work was recently shown in "Obsessive Drawing" at the Folk Art Museum. Through April 15. (American Primitive, 594 Broadway, at Houston St. 212-966-1530.)

**FIONA BANNER**
Banner blitzes New York with a multi-venue show and a new book that reproduces images of the hundred and fifty-nine fighter planes currently in service throughout the world. A just-closed show at a Tracy Williams annex on Greenwich Street dangled plastic models of all the planes from the ceiling; a roll call of names projected on the wall—Tornado, Hawker Hunter, Thunderbolt, Freedom Fighter—underscored the fact that these aircraft were built to kill. Still on view at Williams's town-house gallery are a couple of real airplane parts with text scrawled on them describing a woman's body, and Printed Matter, in Chelsea, is presenting additional works related to the project. Despite their obvious geopolitical pertinence, the sum total of these gestures is vague, and they don't rise to the level of great agitprop. Through April 22. (Williams, 313 W. 4th St. 212-229-2757.)

**VALENTINA DUBASKY**
The first in a series of two exhibitions featuring DuBasky's paintings of birds and their habitats draws heavily from cave paintings—particularly of Buddhist origin—and petroglyphs glimpsed on her travels through Europe, along the Silk Route, and through the rain forests of Indochina. Silhouette heads and beaks of herons and cranes, necks curving with calligraphic elegance, and flat, shimmering fields of background color conjure both ancient sources and more recent embroideries and scroll painting. DuBasky's renditions are far from the exactitude of Audubon illustration, but the ties with natural history and science explain why they were exhibited at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington before arriving here. Through April 15. (Pelavin, 13 Jay St. 212-925-9424.)

### *Short List*

**MARCEL BROODTHAERS:** Peter Freeman, 560 Broadway. 212-966-5154. Through April 15. **RICO GATSON:** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 212-226-3232. Through April 24. **TONY OURSLER:** Nyehaus, 15 Gramercy Park S. 212-995-1785. Through April 29.

## DANCE

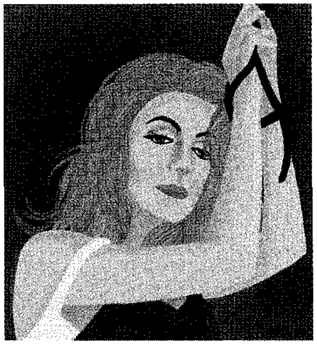
**CHILDREN OF UGANDA**
Twenty-two of Uganda's 2.4 million children orphaned by AIDS and war take the Joyce stage for a program of fast-paced dancing, singing, and drumming. The artistic director, Peter Kasule, grew up in the troupe and knows how to generate lightning-quick steps, silky muscle articulations, and wide, fun-loving smiles. The children, who range in age from eight to eighteen, are unsentimental performers, which makes their sheer exuberance all the more affecting. With songs in Luganda, Swahili, and English and dances from several African countries. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. April 11-14 at 7, April 15 at 2 and 7, and April 16 at 2.)

**"FEST FORWARD: HIP-HOP UNBOUND"**
The Skirball Center's weeklong celebration of thirty years of hip-hop concludes. For a full schedule, see www.hiphopunbound.com. (566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-279-4200. April 11-15.)

**THE ALLEN BODY GROUP / JENNIE MARYTAI LIU**
In a shared evening, the young choreographers Malinda Allen and Jennie Liu each present a conceptually ambitious work. Allen's "Einstein's Dreams" takes on the theory of relativity, alternating scenes from the scientist's 1905 cusp-of-revelation moment with danced realizations of the theory's various ramifications. Allen's eclectic vocabulary includes acro-

## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
## THE DAY JOB

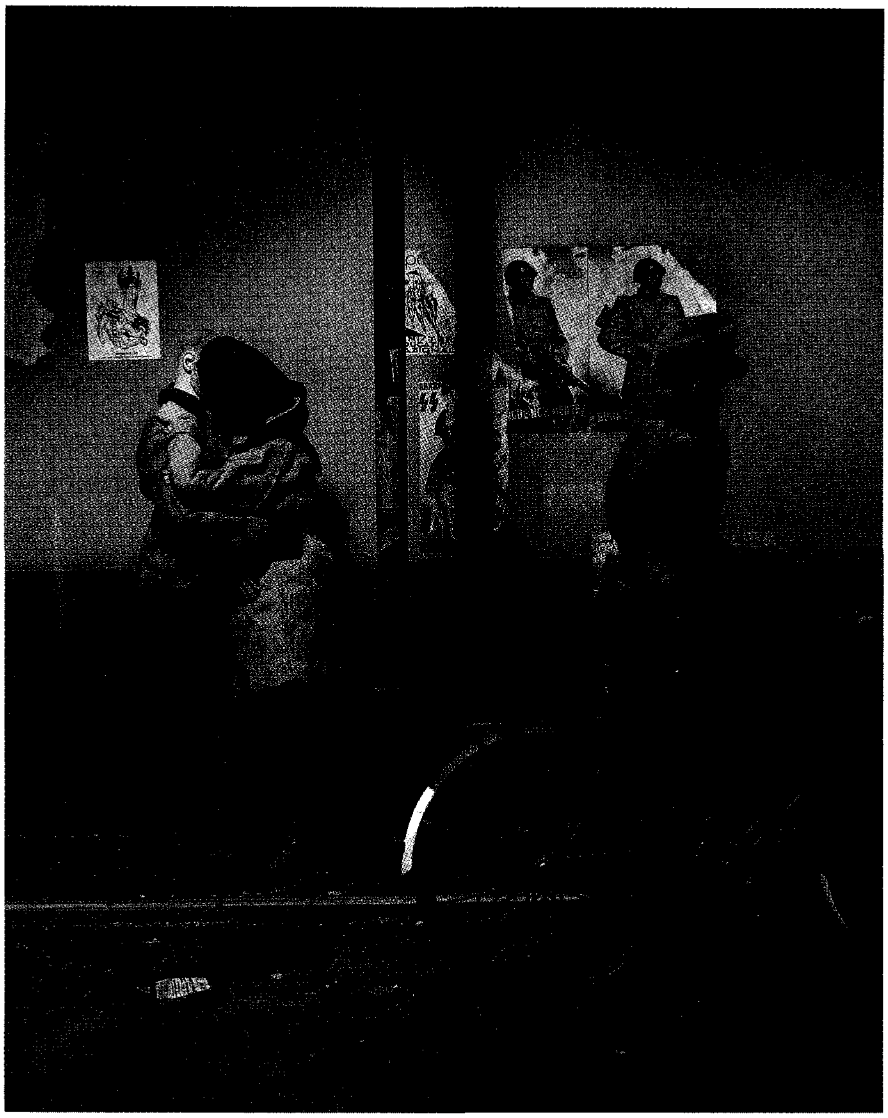
It was not long ago that "Belle de Jour" enjoyed a successful run in New York, but that is no reason not to welcome it back. (It shows at the Paris Theatre for two weeks, beginning April 14.)



Indeed, one could make the case that Luis Buñuel's masterwork of 1967 should be permanently screened around the clock; any residents who notice a slight decrease in their desires, or who feel themselves in danger of not falling prey to temptation, could duck briefly into the film and emerge refreshed, with their faith in fantasy restored. That is the lesson handed down by Buñuel's heroine, the refulgent Parisian housewife incarnated by Catherine Deneuve (with a little help from Yves Saint Laurent). She acquires a taste for high-end prostitution, sliding into adultery not, as Emma Bovary does, out of wretchedness and ennui but simply because she can, changing lovers as if they were shoes from the new season's collection. Had she appeared neurotic, the movie would have quickly shown its age; thanks to the deadpan precision of Buñuel and Deneuve, its subversion has never gone out of style.

—*Anthony Lane*

DIVYA SRINIVASAN



*"Milan, November 1944," from 2005, by Paolo Ventura, at Hasted Hunt.*

batics, and her sometimes whimsical, even steamy interpretations are far from dry. (Time slows down with a very, very long kiss.) Liu's "Learning in Lower Animals" draws on a 1968 textbook about invertebrate sea creatures. The members of a commune or family explore group dynamics in childlike horseplay and act out scenes from Liu's home movies. The dance is itself jellyfish-like, wanting in structural bones. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. April 13-15 at 7:30.)

**"RED TIDE BLOOMING"**

Taylor Mac's bawdy and exotic performance art takes aim at our culture's obsession with sameness and profitability, blending burlesque, spoken text, and dance to tweak gender and cultural clichés and explore such topical subjects as Bush's "war on terror" and the sex appeal of Dick Cheney. In his first full-length group show, Mac joins forces with other like-minded artists, such as the satirical burlesque performer Julie Atlas Muz (who choreographs here) and the wonderful puppeteer Basil Twist, to create an entertainingly freaky allegory of the evils of gentrification. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave. 212-352-3101. April 13-14 at 8, April 15 at 5 and 8, and April 16 at 5. Through April 23.)

**MARIA HASSABI**

In "Still Smoking," the up-and-coming choreographer's new evening-length work, the focus is on urban alienation: a girl stands alone onstage, loudly vocalizing while five others stride purposefully in other directions. As they swarm about, one dancer's motion is picked up seconds later by another; it's as if the same signals are always in the air, but the dancers' antennae work differently. Later, when the mismatched downtown crew starts waving arms to a feel-good groove, it's like watching the cast of "Rent" in "Fame." Hassabi works with an eye-catching movement vocabulary—equal parts sidewalk and catwalk, bedroom and club. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. April 13 and April 15 at 8 and April 14 at 7 and 9:30.)

**DAVID PARKER AND THE BANG GROUP**

To celebrate its tenth anniversary, the quintessentially downtown troupe heads uptown to the intimate stage at Symphony Space to perform its own sly brand of tap-inflected dance cabaret. Parker marks the giddy occasion with "Backward and in Heels," a screwball fantasia on show tunes and sacred music (and their happy intersections, à la "The Sound of Music"). The seven quirky, wonderfully nervy dancers are unfazed by it all: the Cinderella slipper, the costume with dozens of flying straps, the Gene Kelly hoofer number, and the prone, floor-thumping dance to a Muzak version of "Moon River." The longtime Bang Group members Jeffrey Kazin and Amber Sloan reprise Parker's 1990 breakout dance, "We're Not Married," while Parker himself takes the stage for the première of Kay Cummings's "Surprising Symphony." (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. April 13-15 at 8:30.)

**"BEST OF THE BEST INDIAN DANCE"**

Over the course of a few hours, nine collegiate and professional teams of dancers specializing in two traditional forms of Indian dance (bhangra and *raas-garba*) and one vibrant new form (Bollywood/fusion) compete for the top spot in their category and the coveted Best of the Best prize. The teams, who have come from as far as California and Vancouver, are judged by experts for style, execution, and the ineffable "wow factor"—especially crucial in the highly choreographed Bollywood dance extravaganzas. Several teams are bringing live musicians, and there will be a special appearance by Malkit Singh, the "king of bhangra music." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. April 15 at 7.)

**MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY**

Heavily in debt, but artistically resilient, the country's oldest dance troupe wobbles into its eightieth-anniversary celebrations. Several small, free events at the 92nd Street Y, the Guggenheim, and the Public Library pad a single full-scale performance at the Skirball Center. That program, however, is appropriately grand, including a sampling of Graham's earliest works ("Heretic," "Lamentation"). The superlative former Ailey dancer Desmond Richardson joins Richard Move, who is known for embodying Graham, for a rare duet from "Part Real-Part Dream" (1965), and Fang-Yi Sheu, the Graham company's igneous star, essays the Cassandra solo from "Clytemnestra" (1958). (566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-992-8484. April 18 at 7:30. See www.marthagraham.org for further details.)

**STEPHEN PETRONIO COMPANY**

With "Bloom," Petronio continues a fruitful collaboration with the songwriter Rufus Wainwright. This time the score is for children's choir—the forty-four-strong Young People's Chorus of New York City, filling both sides of the Joyce's loge, humming brilliant pop harmonies and singing the words of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. The choreography is expansive, with ensemble canons and space-slicing movement in Petronio's slackened-classical vein. "Bud Suite," an expansion of last year's moving "Bud," finds lighter, more tender, and sometimes funnier moments between romantic partners in four recent Wainwright songs. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. April 18 at 8. Through April 23.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC
## OPERA

**METROPOLITAN OPERA**

April 12 and April 15 at 8: The Met's version of **"Le Nozze di Figaro,"** a busy but effective production conceived by Jonathan Miller, has become a house favorite. This run is distinctive not only for its wise and elegant Countess, Soile Isokoski, but also for a new Cherubino, Alice Coote, whose voice has been compared to that of her teacher, Janet Baker. Also with the excellent Andrea Rost, Peter Mattei, and John Relyea; Mark Wigglesworth conducts. ♦ April 13 at 8: The final performance of **"Fidelio,"** Beethoven's happy symphony of freedom and justice, is a revival of Jürgen Flimm's bracing modern production, which features Erika Sunnegårdh (as Leonore), Jennifer Welch-Babidge, Richard Margison (a divinely weary Florestan), Gregory Turay, Alan Held, Kristinn Sigmundsson, and James Morris; Paul Nadler. ♦ April 14 at 8: The Zeffirelli production of **"La Traviata,"** always a crowd-pleaser, with Hei-Kyung Hong, Frank Lopardo, and Dwayne Croft in the leading roles; Marco Armiliato. (This is the final performance.) ♦ April 15 at 1:30: **"Don Pasquale,"** Otto Schenk's swan-song production for the Met, will be one to tell the bambini about. Rolf Langenfass's sets and costumes are traditional but imaginative, and Schenk's cunning direction allows Donizetti's buffo charmer to resonate with deeper and more stimulating emotions. Anna Netrebko, brazen, beautiful, and vocally indomitable, is an utterly winning Norina; Mariusz Kwiecien, as Malatesta, uses his voice (and his physique) with force and wit. Also with the superb Simone Alaimo and Juan Diego Flórez; Maurizio Benini conducts a swift and knowing performance. ♦ April 17 at 7: Robert Wilson's famously static production of **"Lohengrin,"** bathed continually in deep-blue light, embraces rather than relieves Wagner's glacial sense of pacing. Some love it and some hate it, but the lead singers—Karita Mattila and Ben Heppner—should bring enough glory to the stage to keep everyone happy. Philippe Auguin conducts. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

**NEW YORK CITY OPERA**
April 13 at 7:30 and April 15 at 1:30: Jonathan Eaton's production of Bizet's **"Carmen"** elegantly reflects the opera's psychological shades of warmth and coolness, from its sun-washed Seville porticoes to its cavernous, garnet-draped tavern. Kate Aldrich, an up-and-coming mezzo-soprano, takes the title role, sharing the stage with Laquita Mitchell, Robert Breault, and Michael Chioldi; George Manahan conducts. ♦ April 14 at 8: **"La Bohème,"** with Yunah Lee, Jennifer Black, Gerard Powers, and Philip Torre; David Wroe. ♦ April 15 at 8: **"Don Giovanni,"** with Claudia Waite, Caroline Worra, Timothy Kuhn, Jason Grant, and Brian Anderson; Steven Mosteller. ♦ April 16 at 1:30 and April 18 at 7:30: A revival of Mark Lamos's admired production of Handel's **"Acis and Galatea,"** a masquelike, aristocratic entertainment that holds the stage because of its tender humanity and lyrical touch. Sarah Jane McMahon and Philippe Castagner take the title roles; Ransom Wilson, making his début, conducts. (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500.)

**AMATO OPERA**
The East Village's little home-town opera company offers Mozart's **"Don Giovanni"** sung in Italian, prepared under the musical and dramatic direction of its patriarch, Anthony Amato. Expect colorful singing and playing in the committed, if scrappy, Italian-hill-town manner. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. April 14-15 at 7:30. Through April 30.)

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NATIONAL CHORALE: THE B-MINOR MASS**
If any musical work approaches the status of the Sistine Chapel, it is Bach's monumental setting of the Catholic Mass. Martin Josman conducts his chorus and orchestra, with a group of vocal soloists that includes Rebecca Copley and James Bobick (fresh from City Opera's production of "Lysistrata"). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-333-5333. April 14 at 8.)

**ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT: HANDEL'S "SOLOMON"**
If anyone can bring Handel's stately Biblical oratorio to life, it is René Jacobs, the countertenor turned conductor whose interpretations of Baroque and Classical works combine a melting lyricism with an unerring (and unsentimental) sense of structure. His vocal soloists include David Hansen (in the title role), Malin Christensson, and Marie Arnet, backed up by the English Voices chorus. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. April 16 at 3.)

**BACH VESPERS AT HOLY TRINITY**
One of J. S. Bach's most affecting cantatas, "Christ Lag in Todesbanden" (No. 4) highlights the Easter Sunday concert at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, which has presented the Bach cantatas in liturgical sequence for thirty-eight years. Also with a vocal work by a lesser-known Bach, Johann Michael, and organ music by J.S.; Rick Erickson is the music director. (Central Park W. at 65th St. April 16 at 5. A donation is suggested.)

## RECITALS

**ARTEK**
Though forgotten today, "Der Tod Jesu," an oratorio by Carl Heinrich Graun (a major Baroque composer and an ancestor of Vladimir Nabokov), was the most popular German Passion work of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—surpassing even those of Bach. Gwendolyn Toth's excellent group, in residence at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, offers a selection of solos and duets from the piece sung by Jessica Tranzillo, Sofia Dimitrova, Juli Borst, Michael Reid, Philip Anderson, and Gary Dimon. (135 W. 31st St. April 12 at 1:15. No tickets required.)

Words on Music

**Borders Rock music expert Andy Sibray says:**
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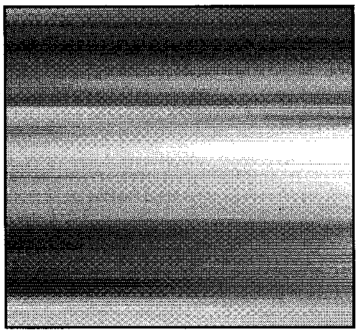

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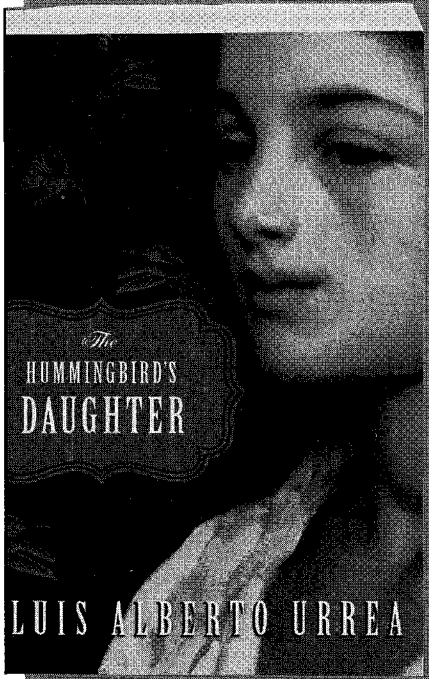

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## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
## METAMORPHOSIS

Artists often take a while to find their story, and in the old days female artists took longer. The Martha Graham company's gala on April 18 will start with some "exotic" dances by Graham's teachers Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, plus a piece in the same vein—"Three Gopi Maidens" (1926), a pretty little pseudo-Hindu business—by Graham herself, who was in her thirties when she made it. Then, in the words of Janet Eilber, the company's new artistic director, "the light bulb went on," and the veil-wafting stopped. The gala will include "Heretic" (1929), in which the dancers look less like people than like an iceberg cracking. After that comes "Steps in the Street" (1936), Graham's response to the Spanish Civil War. If this ensemble had been sent to Barcelona, Franco would have lost. The rest of the program will continue the career-tracking, with some added twists. Aeschylus will be read as the great Fang-Yi Sheu performs Cassandra's we're-all-going-to-die solo from "Clytemnestra," and the Graham impersonator Richard Move will put in a guest appearance.

—*Joan Acocella*

**BARGEMUSIC**
Russian music rules at the barge this weekend. April 13-14 at 7:30: The pianist Dmitri Alexeev, one of the series' most distinguished artists, offers a feast of works by Tchaikovsky (selections from "The Seasons"), Scriabin, Shostakovich, and Rachmaninoff (two Preludes and the sweeping Second Sonata, Op. 36). ♦ April 15 at 7:30 and April 16 at 4: The spirited and smoothly fashioned works of Ivan Khandoshkin, a serf whose virtuosity on the violin bought him his freedom, offer a window onto the life of the court of Catherine the Great. Six of his Russian folk-song transcriptions open a program (with Alexeev and some string-playing friends) that moves on to bigger pieces, by Schubert (a Russian favorite), Haydn, and Shostakovich (the Piano Quintet). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

**DÉBUTS**
With the partial lull in the concert schedule that comes along with Easter week, young artists can grab a bit more of the spotlight. April 13 at 8: The ambitious Finnish-Canadian soprano Eilana Lappalainen (who has sung Salome at City Opera) offers a luxuriant late-Romantic program of songs by Sibelius, Puccini, Strauss, and Wagner (the "Wesendonck-Lieder"). Robert Miller accompanies her. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.) ♦ April 17 at 8: In another Weill début, the Italian pianist Antonio Di Cristofano offers a cover-the-bases concert of works by Mozart, Chopin (the Scherzo No. 2 in B-Flat Minor), Brahms, Berg (the Sonata), and Scriabin. (212-247-7800.) ♦ April 17 at 8: An unusually wide-ranging Alice Tully Hall program from the Russian-Israeli pianist Yoni Levyatov features music by Bolcom, Schumann (the Humoresque in B-Flat Major), Knussen, Mozart, Liszt (the Hungarian Rhapsody No. 13 and two Schubert transcriptions), and the prominent young Israeli composer Avner Dorman. (212-721-6500.)

**FAZIL SAY**
The irrepressible composer-pianist, a virtuoso in the grand tradition, spends a couple of hours on the straight and narrow in one of the Metropolitan Museum's occasional "Piano Forte" concerts of music by Bach (including the Italian Concerto and the French Suite No. 6 in E Major) and Brahms (the Four Intermezzi, Op. 117). (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. April 14 at 8.)

**POMERIUM**
Alexander Blachly's renowned chamber choir, devoted to the music of the Renaissance, offers a journey from Palm Sunday to Eastertide through great works by Dufay, Senfl, Lassus, Gesualdo, Monteverdi, and Byrd. The venue—the medieval Cloisters museum—should be ideal. (Fort Tryon Park. 212-650-2290. April 15 at 1 and 3.)

**MUSIC AT THE FRICK COLLECTION**
The Frick's serene, domelike auditorium, a symbol of American Gilded Age affluence, is a regular showcase for talented young European musicians. Its next concert comes courtesy of Il Dolcimelo, a German period-instrument group formed in 1994, which will offer a selection of concertos and sonatas by Vivaldi, Corelli, Handel, and Telemann. (1 E. 70th St. 212-547-0709. April 16 at 5.)

**JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET**
The still-venerable group—a gritty-sounding culture carrier of postwar modernist style—performs quartets by Mozart (in F Major, K. 590), Brahms, and Shostakovich (No. 14 in F-Sharp Major). (Alice Tully Hall. April 18 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-769-7406. )

**ROULETTE**
Experimentalist music finds a safe harbor in this longtime series, which comes and goes in two-week bursts. The latest begins with the downtown piano queen Kathleen Supové, who teams up with the composer Haeyoung Kim (a.k.a. Bubblyfish) for a performance of his new work "Hidden, Lost, Forgotten," a fantasia for piano, voice samples, computer, and Gameboys. (Location One, 20 Greene St. 212-219-8242. April 18 at 8:30.)

## MOVIES
## OPENING

**BELLE DE JOUR**
Luis Buñuel's 1967 drama, about a frigid bourgeois housewife (Catherine Deneuve) who becomes a prostitute. In French. Opening April 14. (Paris.)

**BLACKBALLED: THE BOBBY DUKES STORY**
A mock documentary, directed by Brant Sersen, about a superstar of paintball. Opening April 13. (Pioneer Theatre.)

**HARD CANDY**
A psychological thriller about a man who brings home a fourteen-year-old girl whom he met in an Internet chat room. Directed by David Slade. Opening April 14. (Angelika Film Center.)

**HERBIE HANCOCK: POSSIBILITIES**
A documentary, directed by Doug Biro and Jon Fine, about the keyboard player's recording sessions with Christina Aguilera, Carlos Santana, and others. Opening April 14. (Quad Cinema.)

**I AM A SEX ADDICT**
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening April 12. (IFC Center.)

**KINKY BOOTS**
Chiwetel Ejiofor plays a drag queen hired to help save a shoe company, in a comedy directed by Julian Jarrold. Opening April 14. (In wide release.)

**LOOK BOTH WAYS**
An Australian drama, directed by Sarah Watt, about a woman who imagines danger everywhere and then witnesses a real catastrophe. Opening April 14. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**MOUNTAIN PATROL: KEKEXILI**
Lu Chuan directed this true-adventure drama, about Tibetans who organize to fight animal poachers. In Mandarin and Tibetan. Opening April 14. (The ImaginAsian and Sunshine Cinema.)

**LA MUJER DE MI HERMANO (MY BROTHER'S WIFE)**
A melodrama, directed by Ricardo de Montreuil, about a woman who is attracted to her husband's brother. In Spanish. (In wide release.)

**NATHALIE**
Fanny Ardant, Gérard Depardieu, and Emmanuelle Béart star in this drama, directed by Anne Fontaine, about a middle-aged wife who tries to find her unfaithful husband a lover. In French. Opening April 14. (Cinema Village.)

**THE NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening April 14. (In wide release.)

**SCARY MOVIE 4**
Another takeoff on horror movies, with Leslie Nielsen and Anna Faris, directed by David Zucker. Opening April 14. (In wide release.)

**THE SISTERS**
A modern adaptation of Chekhov's "Three Sisters," directed by Arthur Allan Seidelman and starring Maria Bello, Erika Christensen, Mary Stuart Masterson, and Tony Goldwyn. Opening April 14. (Village East Cinemas.)

**SISTERS IN LAW**
Kim Longinotto directed this documentary, about two women in Cameroon, a prosecutor and a judge, who challenge local patriarchal law. Opening April 12. (Film Forum.)

**THE WILD**
An animated comedy, directed by Steve (Spaz) Williams, about animals who escape from a New York zoo to look for a lost cub. With the voices of Kiefer Sutherland, James Belushi, Janeane Garofalo, and Eddie Izzard. Opening April 14. (In wide release.)

## NOW PLAYING

**BASIC INSTINCT 2**
Sharon Stone, in a reprise of her role as the allegedly murderous pulp novelist Catherine Tramell, slithers across the screen with perfectly smooth skin and a dead look in her eyes as she sinks her talons into the life of the maddeningly inert British psychiatrist Dr. Michael Glass (David Morrissey). The director, Michael Caton-Jones, leaches any pos-

GREG CHRISTIE

sible excitement from this bafflingly staid thriller set in London, and even the tawdry attempts to liven it up with sex and violence fail to stir.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)

**BRICK**

The young director Rian Johnson, after raising money from his friends and parents, pulled off his dream project, a film noir. But in Johnson's version of noir, the inexorable Sam Spade-type detective is a mop-headed student, Brendan (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), wearing a sweatshirt and wire-rim glasses, and the setting is not the nighttime big city of Hollywood imagination—the usual claustrophobic noir precinct—but the preposterously sunny skies and wide-open spaces of San Clemente, California. The story, which involves a dead girl and a student drug gang, has the semi-unfathomable complexity of "The Maltese Falcon" and "The Big Sleep," and the characters, lounging against the blank outside wall of the school, speak in cryptic jive patter ("Bulls would only gum it," i.e., cops are dumb). "Brick" is often quite funny, but not in a campy or condescending way—Johnson never makes the distance from the original models seem laughable. The movie develops its own kind of goofy tensions: Johnson renders the wide-open spaces of a school yard as menacing as the darkened rooms of a Warner Bros. thriller.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 4/3/06.) (Angelika Film Center.)

**L'ENFANT (THE CHILD)**

A boy is born to a pair of Belgian lovers, who seem hardly more than children themselves. Sonia (Déborah François) is pretty, pained, and underdressed, with broad bones and a dirty laugh. Bruno (Jérémie Renier) is a wastrel and a petty crook, with a hole where his conscience ought to be. He doesn't work, he spends money as soon as he gets it, and, on a whim, he sells the little boy; the remainder of the film, by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, guides us through the aftermath of his folly. Many of the Dardenne trademarks, familiar from "Rosetta," are in place: the bleak and shabby backdrops, the quick but unflamboyant manner of the storytelling, and the urge to delve without scorn into the lives and morals of an underclass. Despite all those virtues, the new film feels laborious—Bruno's actions seem hollow and repugnant, fending off our sympathies, and his presence elbows out the more deserving cases of Sonia and Steve (Jérémie Segard), the teen-aged accomplice to his crimes. The film ends with Bruno in tears, but any parents watching will be far more concerned about the baby, who for some mysterious reason never cries at all. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (3/27/06) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

**FREE ZONE**

Hanna (Hanna Laslo), a hard-charging Israeli woman, crosses the border into Jordan in an S.U.V. in order to conclude a business deal in an ungoverned economic trading zone bordered by Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia—an odd but hopeful place in which national and religious differences get dissolved by commerce. Her passenger is a young American woman (Natalie Portman), whose engagement to a Spanish-Israeli man is coming apart. This movie by the veteran Israeli filmmaker Amos Gitai has some exciting passages and a sense of talented people knocking around in a vacuum. But, structurally, it's a mess. People barge in with long, complicated stories falling from their lips, and we have only a vague idea of who they are; Natalie Portman seems to be a mere observer, and then, abruptly, she ups and runs away. See it for the landscapes and an occasional burst of powerful emotion. In English, Hebrew, and Arabic.—*D.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

**HOMECOMING**

The best political film of 2005 was an hour-long movie made by the director Joe Dante and the screenwriter Sam Hamm for the "Masters of Horror" series on Showtime, in which the undead call the bluff of a warmongering President. A White House political op, David Murch (Jon Tenney), says that he wishes that those killed in combat today could rise from the grave to testify that they died for a good cause. After POTUS runs this line into the ground, the war dead resurrect themselves so they can vote against him. This brilliant little black comedy turns zombie-film conventions on their head: the zombies resist acting like homicidal maniacs, and the most sanguinary character is a kamikaze right-wing blonde named Jane Cleaver (Thea Gill), who gets her jollies delivering pain to her lovers (including Murch) and making blood sport out of her enemies. Hamm wrings every bit of sardonic humor and pathos out of the outré situations, and Dante builds to a great punch line: never before has the sight of a zombie breaking a human neck conjured such a combination of shock, aw-shucks humor, and oddball inspirationalism.—*Michael Sragow* (BAM Rose Cinemas; April 13.)

what they really want. Other players include Christopher Plummer, as the bank's suspiciously smooth president, and Jodie Foster, as some kind of facilitator; her role is never quite specified, and you could say the same of Spike Lee, who directs the film as if barely enthused by the prospect of a heist. He mangles a few thrills, ignores the claims of logic, and underuses half of his tremendous cast. (The best cameo comes from Florina Petcu, as a shameless, cigarette-waving Albanian floozy.) What does remain, though, is a nervous riff on civic tension, a mean and funny turn from Washington, and—as you might expect from Lee—a constant, low-level venting of racial spleen.—*A.L.* (3/27/06) (In wide release.)

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## DVD NOTES
## NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Spike Lee's most vital films reveal an extraordinary variety of tones in his deliberately narrow geographical range and social settings. Packaged in **"The Spike Lee Joint Collection"** (Universal), they serve as a powerful reminder of Lee's importance, alongside Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen, as a modern urban folklorist.

The set contains five films: "Do the Right Thing" (from 1989), "Mo' Better Blues" (1990), "Jungle Fever" (1991), "Crooklyn" (1994), and "Clockers" (1995). "Do the Right Thing," the film that first made Lee a star director, has lost none of its strength. He confines his characters to a few blocks in Bedford-Stuyvesant during a sweltering summer that is made even hotter by a burst of racial conflict. The burly, angry Radio Raheem (Bill Nunn) provokes a confrontation by bringing his rap-blaring boom box into Sal's Pizzeria, the neighborhood's only white-owned business. If "Do the Right Thing," a febrile record of raw moods in the Ed Koch era, exposes Lee's limitations as a director—his lack of perspective resulting from his attachment to, and advocacy for, the community that he films—it also reflects the unique sensibility that, to this day, gives his films the immediacy of a news report from the front lines of the city. Lee's originality, as well as his modernism, lies in his translation of the free-form poetry of popular speech into script, performance, and images; his characters unleash a dazzling flow of patter that enlivens even dire circumstances, and the d.j. of the local storefront radio station (Samuel L. Jackson) looks out the window and chronicles street life in real time.

Lee also pressed hot buttons of the day in "Jungle Fever," about interracial romance, and "Clockers," about drug dealers, but he looked to jazz for inspiration in the other two movies in the set. In the gentle "Crooklyn," he fictionalized his childhood view of his jazz-musician father, Bill Lee. "Mo' Better Blues," a melancholy drama about the fragile bonds of an artist to his art, stars Denzel Washington as Bleek Gilliam, a prodigious trumpeter whose career is threatened by problems with women, money, bandmates, and especially his manager, Giant (Lee himself), a compulsive gambler. Lee shows how jazz, for all of its studied virtuosity and intellectual complexity, is rooted in the rough daily realities of African-American urban life. Yet here, too, the word comes first: the story is driven by oral storytelling of all forms, especially by word-of-mouth wisdom from father to son, which Lee dramatizes in a narrative that spans an entire generation in bold leaps of time.

—*Richard Brody*

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**I AM A SEX ADDICT**

Trussed in a tuxedo, standing in a church vestibule moments before marrying for the third time, the American independent filmmaker Caveh Zahedi tells the tale of the obsessive relations with prostitutes that doomed his first two marriages and other relationships. In the comic sketches that follow in this mock confessional, the wiry, puckish, middle-aged Zahedi recounts his erotic fixations and also his attempt to make a film about them: as he acts out events from his youth, he asks the audience to take him for his younger self and to take San Francisco for Paris because he can't afford the trip. Zahedi's uninhibited antics are funny from the get-go, with viperish asides about the actors' private lives, home movies showing the real people they're playing, outrageous fantasy sequences, and even a scene of an actress's refusal to simulate the act that he craves. Zahedi follows the tried-and-true recipe of anything for a laugh, and it works: even his over-the-top sexual provocations come off as both pathetic and endearing.—*Richard Brody* (IFC Center.)

**INSIDE MAN**

A gang led by an unflustered leader in shades (Clive Owen) holds up a New York bank, taking a small crowd of hostages. Along come the cops (including Willem Dafoe) and a couple of expert negotiators (Denzel Washington and Chiwetel Ejiofor), who, unconvinced by the thieves' demands, begin to wonder

**LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN**

Paul McGuigan's rackety thriller starts a quarter of a century ago, then leaps to the present day. The connection between these two time zones is one of the mysteries of the movie, though not so mysterious that most viewers won't have worked it out after an hour. The film badly wants to be baffling, just as it yearns to be cynical, thuggish, and smart—not unlike the Boss (Morgan Freeman) and the Rabbi (Ben Kingsley), a pair of hoods who nourish a mutual hatred. Each is also interested in Slevin (Josh Hartnett), a hapless young man who finds himself in the wrong apartment at the wrong time. The ensuing complications are borrowed, with acknowledgement, from "North by Northwest," although it was possibly unwise to invite comparisons with one of cinema's most smoothly pleasurable tales. McGuigan's movie is more concerned with pleasing itself, and in that pursuit many strong supporting players, such as Stanley Tucci, Lucy Liu, Danny Aiello, and Bruce Willis, are left embarrassed and stranded. Only one puzzle remains: given that we see both the Willis of today and the Willis of yesteryear, how come he looks younger now?—*A.L.* (4/10/06) (In wide release.)

**SLITHER**

It's rednecks versus zombies in James Gunn's delightfully disgusting comic horror film, in which parasites from outer space invade their hosts. Gunn (who wrote the exuberant "Dawn of the Dead" remake) is a true movie nut, with a tongue-in-cheek approach to horror that aspires to "Tremors" and "Rabid" and injects the genre with his own brand of twisty black humor. The film is equally outrageous and sardonic, and the cast, which includes "Firefly"'s great Nathan Fillion, is more than game (literally). Awful fun.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

**THANK YOU FOR SMOKING**
Nick Naylor (Aaron Eckhart), the chief spokesman for the tobacco lobby in Washington, is handsome and likable, a mixture of swagger and impudent candor. Nick knows that his arguments in favor of smoking are rubbish, but he enjoys the game of spin too much to give it up. This shrewdly entertaining satirical comedy, adapted by Jason Reitman (son of the veteran director Ivan Reitman) from Christopher Buckley's 1994 novel, loves the brazen moxie of "sin" lobbyists without being fooled by them. The comic highlight of the movie is the regular lunch sessions that Nick holds with the lobbyists for the alcohol and firearms industries (Maria Bello and David Koechner)—the three of them, boasting of the lethality of their respective clients, might be doing a recurring skit on "Saturday Night Live." When Nick gets written up by a seductive reporter (Katie Holmes) from the Washington *Probe*, his life goes into a tailspin. With Cameron Bright as Nick's adoring son, J. K. Simmons and Robert Duvall as tobacco executives, Rob Lowe and Adam Brody as glib Hollywood types, and William H. Macy as a sanctimonious anti-smoking senator from Vermont who has a collection of maple-syrup bottles in his office. Jason Reitman's direction is fast-moving and witty; the movie is a winner.—*D.D.* (4/3/06) (In wide release.)

**THE WAYWARD CLOUD**
It starts with a couple in bed doing unusual things with a watermelon—and then it gets strange. The story concerns a lonely young woman in an oppressively large and quiet Taipei apartment block who dreams of love, and a man who stars in the hard-core porn movie that a video crew is taping on the floor above. Over the course of the film, the two protagonists will, so to speak, come together. The director Tsai Ming-Liang's attitude toward sex is provocatively adolescent and mechanical, but if it's unclear whether the emotional void at the film's center is his own or merely his characters', his attitude toward storytelling is clear: the grotesque money shots that punctuate the action, such as it is, are a stand-in for the dramatic and emotional resolutions of more conventional narratives. Music-video fantasy sequences of loopily choreographed Chinese pop tunes (including a version of "Sixteen Tons" set in a men's bathroom and featuring a man impersonating a penis) are inventive, their erotic triviality a fizzy substitute for the one real thing. In its aggressively antic view of sex, Tsai's film is beyond good and bad. If its drama, or lack of drama, defies credibility, it must nonetheless be seen to be disbelieved. In Mandarin.—*R.B.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; April 15.)

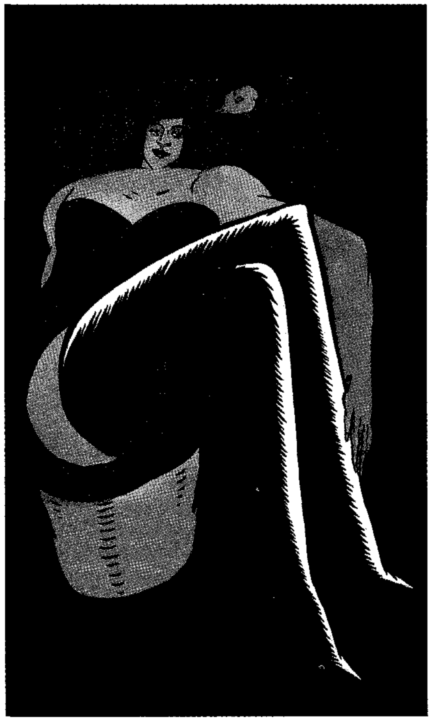
### *Also Playing*

**FAILURE TO LAUNCH:** In wide release. **ICE AGE: THE MELTDOWN:** In wide release. **ON A CLEAR DAY:** In wide release. **STAY ALIVE:** In wide release. **TAKE THE LEAD:** In wide release.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES**
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"New-Filmmakers Presents." April 12 at 6: Short films by Sam Zalutsky (2001-03). ♦ April 12 at 7: "Wrestlemaniac" (2002, Matthew James Sheridan). ♦ April 12 at 8:15: "Beast of Burden" (2005, Sheridan and David M. Watts). ♦ The films of BB Optics. April 12 at 8: "Continental Drift" (1977, Paula Longendyke) and "Letters Not About Love" (1998, Jacki Ochs). ♦ Special screenings. April 13-16: "The Ister" (2004, David Barison and Daniel Ross.) ♦ "Essential Cinema." April 13 at 8: Short films by Bruce Conner (1958-65), Segundo De Chomon (1907), and Tony Conrad (1966). ♦ Through April 23: Alwan Film Festival of Arab and Iranian films. (For complete listings, go to film.alwanforthearts.org.) Selected screenings. April 14 at 6:30: "Pasolini Pa*Palestine" (2005, Ayreen Anastas; in Arabic). ♦ April 15 at 5: "Passion" (2005, Mohamed Malas; in Arabic). ♦ April 15 at 9:30: "Sex and Philosophy" (2005, Mohsen Makhmalbaf; in Tajik). ♦ April 16 at 3: "Bab el Web" (2004, Merzak Allouache; in Arabic and French). ♦ April 17 at 9:30: "Earth and Ashes" (Atiq Rahimi; in Pashtu). ♦ Special event. April 16 at 8: Robert Grenier will present and read his "drawing poems."



*"Kinky Boots," a comedy, opens April 14.*

GRANT SHAFFER

**BAM ROSE CINEMAS**
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—Through April 26: "*Village Voice* Best of 2005." April 12 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Far Side of the Moon" (2003, Robert Lepage; in French). The 6:50 show will be followed by a discussion with Elliott Stein. ♦ April 13 at 6 and 9: "Land of the Dead" (2005, George A. Romero) and "Homecoming" (†). ♦ April 14 at 7: "Mutual Appreciation" (2005, Andrew Bujalski), followed by a Q. & A. with the director. ♦ April 15 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Wayward Cloud" (†). ♦ April 16 at 3, 6, and 9: "Memories of Murder" (2003, Bong Joon-Ho; in Korean and English). ♦ Through April 24: "It Happened in Brooklyn." April 17 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "It Happened in Brooklyn" (1947, Richard Whorf). The 6:50 show will be introduced by the historians John Manbeck and Robert Singer. ♦ Through April 25: "Shelley Winters vs. the Water." April 18 at 6 and 9: "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick).

**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—The films of Don Siegel. April 12-13 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "Dirty Harry" (1971). ♦ In revival. April 14-18 at 1:20, 3:15, 5:10, 7:05, and 9: "Days of Heaven" (1978, Terrence Malick).

**FLORENCE GOULD HALL**
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—The films of Chantal Akerman. April 18 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "Les Rendez-Vous d'Anna" (1978; in French).

**IFC CENTER**
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—In revival. April 14-16 at noon: "Stray Dog" (1949, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." April 14-15: "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" (2001, John Cameron Mitchell), presented by the director, with onstage performances and a Hedwig-impersonation contest. ♦ "Stranger Than Fiction." April 18 at 7:30: "This Film Is Not Yet Rated" (2006, Kirby Dick), followed by a discussion with the director.

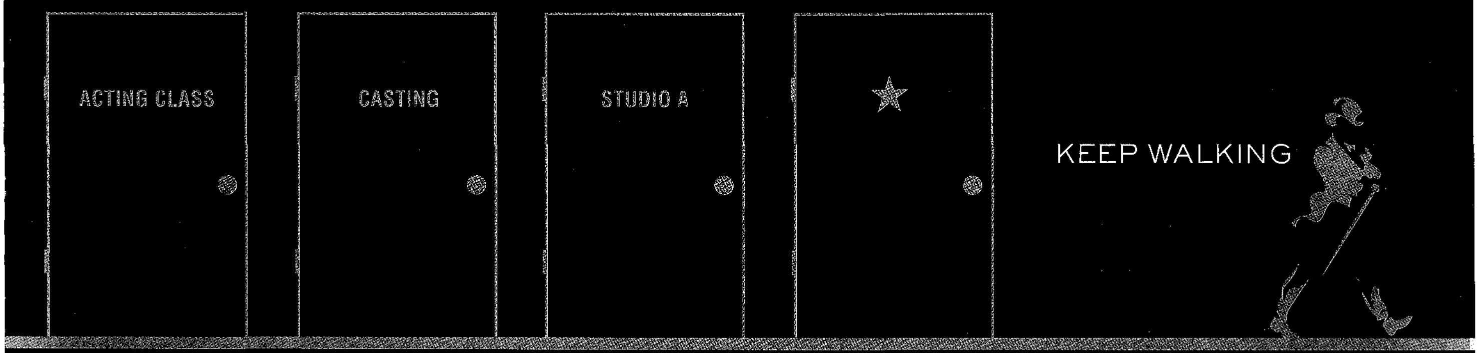
**JAPAN SOCIETY**
333 E. 47th St. (212-715-1258)—"Against the Tide: Rebels & Mavericks in Contemporary Japanese Film." All films are in Japanese. Selected screenings. April 12 at 9: "Knockout" (1989, Junji Sakamoto). ♦ April 13 at 6:15: "Canary" (2004, Akihiko Shiota). ♦ April 14 at 8:30: "Preparations for the Festival" (1975, Kazuo Kuroki). ♦ April 15 at 4: "The Owl" (2004, Kaneto Shindo). ♦ April 15 at 6:30: "Yakuza Graveyard" (1976, Kinji Fukasaku). ♦ April 16 at 4: "Rikodozan: A Hero Extraordinary" (2004 Hae-sung Song). ♦ April 16 at 6:45: "Bullet Ballet" (1998, Shinya Tsukamoto).

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Through April 30: "Baseball and American Culture." April 12 at 6 and April 16 at 5:45: "Field of Dreams" (1989, Phil Alden Robinson). ♦ April 13 at 6: "Viva Baseball" (2005, Dan Klores), introduced by the director. ♦ April 14 at 8:30 and April 17 at 8:15: "Eight Men Out" (1988, John Sayles). ♦ April 15 at 6: "Bang the Drum Slowly" (1973, John Hancock). ♦ April 15 at 8:30: "Bull Durham" (1988, Ron Shelton). ♦ April 16 at 1: "Headin' Home" (1920, Lawrence Windom) and "The Jackie Robinson Story" (1950, Alfred Green), introduced by Carl E. Prince. ♦ Through April 19: "Edvard Munch and His Time." April 12 at 6: "Miss Julie" (1951, Alf Sjöberg; in Swedish). ♦ April 12 at 8 and April 17 at 6: "Ganashatru (An Enemy of the People)" (1989, Satyajit Ray; in Bengali). ♦ April 13 at 6: "Hunger" (1966, Henning Carlsen; in Norwegian and Swedish) and documentary footage by Munch (c. 1927). ♦ April 13 at 8:30 and April 16 at 3: "Dreamplay" (1994, Unni Straume; in Norwegian and Swedish) and "Faces" (1971, Anja Breien; in Danish). ♦ April 14 at 6 and April 16 at 1: "Peer Gynt" (1941/1965, David Bradley). ♦ April 14 at 8: "Enemy of the People" (2005, Erik Skjoldbjærg; in Norwegian). ♦ April 15 at 5: "The Hips of J.W." (1997, João César Monteiro; in Portuguese). ♦ April 15 at 8:30: "Nora Helmer" (1973, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German). ♦ Through April 30: "Ziegler Film, Berlin." April 12 at 8:30: "A Year of the Quiet Sun" (Krzysztof Zanussi; in English and Polish). ♦ April 13 at 8:30: "Four Erotic Tales" (1994-2003, Melvin Van Peebles, Mani Kaul, Susan Streitfeld, and Dito Tsintsadze). ♦ April 14 at 6: "Summer Folk" (1975, Peter Stein; in German). ♦ April 15 at 1:30: "The Publisher" (2001, Bernd Bohlich; in German). ♦ April 16 at 3:30: "The Call of the Toad" (2005, Robert Glinski; in German and Polish). ♦ April 16 at 5:45: "Erotic Tales" (1995-2003, Jos Stelling). ♦ April 17 at 6: "Malou" (1981, Jeanine Meerapfel; in German). ♦ "Asian Cinevisions." April 17 at 8: "Of Love and Eggs" (2004, Garin Nugroho; in Bahasa Indonesian).

**MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—In revival. April 14 at 7:30 and April 15-16 at 6:30: "Wings of Desire" (1987, Wim Wenders; in German, English, and French). ♦ Films featuring Anna May Wong. April 15-16 at 2: "Island of Lost Men" (1939, Kurt Neumann). ♦ April 15 at 4:30: "Bombs Over Burma" (1942, Joseph H. Lewis). ♦ April 16 at 4:30: "Lady from Chungking" (1942, William Night).

**PIONEER THEATRE**
155 E. 3rd St. (212-591-0434)—Special screenings. April 12 at 7: "Jared" (2002, Joyce Draganosky) and "Ronda Nocturna" (2005, Edgardo Cozarinsky; in Spanish). ♦ April 12 at 9 and April 15-16 at 7: "Quality of Life" (2004, Benjamin Morgan). ♦ Through April 26: "Comedy Fortnight." April 13 at 7: A short-film program. ♦ April 14 at 11:30: "Manhattan" (1979, Woody Allen). ♦ April 15 at 11:30: "The Cable Guy" (1996, Ben Stiller). ♦ April 18 at 7: A program of short comedy films. ♦ "One Dark and Stormy Night." April 17 at 7: A program of short horror films.

**SUNSHINE CINEMA**
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—"Sunshine@Midnight." April 14-15: "Dave Chappelle's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Block Party" (2006, Michel Gondry) and "Jesus Christ Superstar" (1973, Norman Jewison).

**THALIA THEATRE**
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Special screenings. April 16 at 2 and April 18 at 3:30: "The Last Temptation of Christ" (1994, Martin Scorsese). ♦ April 16 at 5:30 and April 18 at 7: "Why We Fight" (2005, Eugene Jarecki).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through April 23: "A Road Map of the Soul," the complete films of Krzysztof Kieślowski. All films are in Polish except where noted. April 12 at 1:30 and April 16 at 4:30: "Decalogue," parts five and six. ♦ April 12 at 3:45 and 8:15: "Camera Buff" (1979). ♦ April 13 at 1:30 and April 16 at 6:45: "Decalogue," parts seven and eight. ♦ April 13 at 3:45 and 8:30: "The Calm" (1976) and "From the Point of View of the Night Porter" (1977). ♦ April 13 at 6:15: "The Scar" (1976) and "Slate" (1976). ♦ April 14 at 1:30 and April 16 at 9: "Decalogue," parts nine and ten. ♦ April 14 at 4: "A Short Working Day" (1981) and "Seven Women of Different Ages" (1978). ♦ April 14 at 6 and April 15 at 9:10: "No End" (1984). ♦ April 14 at 8:15 and April 15 at 2:15 and 6:45: "Blind Chance" (1981). ♦ April 15 at 4:45, April 17 at 5:15, and April 18 at 9: "The Double Life of Véronique" (1991; in French and Polish). ♦ April 16 at noon: "Decalogue," parts one and two. ♦ April 16 at 2:15: "Decalogue," parts three and four. ♦ April 17 at 1: "Three Colors: Blue" (1993; in French, Romanian, and Polish). ♦ April 17 at 3 and 7:15 and April 18 at 4:45: "A Short Film About Love" (1988). ♦ April 17 at 9:30 and April 18 at 3 and 7: "A Short Film About Killing" (1987). ♦ April 18 at 1: "Three Colors: White" (1993; in Polish, French, and English).

## READINGS AND TALKS

**"A CELEBRATION OF JANE AUSTEN"**
The actress Hope Davis joins the novelists Siri Hustvedt, Jennifer Egan, and Karen Joy Fowler, the author of "The Jane Austen Book Club," for a tribute to the great novelist. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. April 12 at 7.)

**ALAN WALKER**
The reigning authority on the life and work of the composer and pianist Franz Liszt offers a talk about the musical titan's important friendships with musicians, artists, politicians, prelates, and royals, as part of the ongoing Liszt festival at the Yamaha Artists Services Piano Salon. (689 Fifth Ave., at 54th St., 3rd fl. 212-339-9995, ext. 227. April 13 at 7.)

**GEORGE POLK AWARDS SEMINAR**
Frank Rich, of the *Times*, moderates a discussion about reporting on human rights, with Jerry Mitchell, of the Jackson, Mississippi, *Clarion-Ledger*, Dana Priest, of the Washington *Post*, and Brian Ross, of ABC, all of whom are winners of the annual journalism honor. (Museum of Television & Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. For reservations, which are required, call 516-299-3248. April 18 at 5:45.)

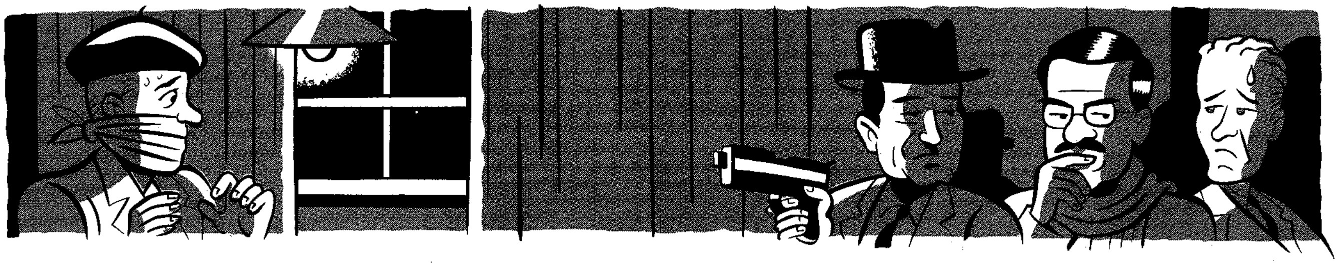
**ERICA JONG**
The author of "Fear of Flying," as well as nineteen other books, talks about "Seducing the Demon: Writing for My Life," her latest work, which started out as a guide for other writers and ended up as a dishy memoir. (Strand Bookstore, Broadway at 12th St. No tickets necessary. April 18 at 6:30.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**EARTH DAY NEW YORK**
Earth Day, which has been around for only a tiny fraction of the earth's history—it was cooked up during the environmental movement in the seventies—doesn't take place until April 22. But here in New York City, the days before its observance are filled with action—or at least Vanderbilt Hall, in Grand Central Terminal, is. The hall hosts an "EarthFair," featuring displays on biodiesel, environmentally friendly living, and conservation. (For more information, visit www.earthdayny.org. April 14-15.)

**RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY**
The Greatest Show on Earth, complete with elephants, clowns, and acrobats, ends its run at Madison Square Garden on April 17. (212-307-7171.)

**AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES**
After all the excitement of Asia Week and the Old Masters sales, things slow down on the auction circuit long enough to focus on those more familiar objects of envy and delight: jewels. **Christie's** jewelry sale on April 11 includes a fifty-carat "colorless" diamond ring, as well as a showy necklace with a forty-carat yellow pear-shaped diamond pendant. Less grand perhaps, but with a charm of its own, is a set of perfume bottles, each with its own ornate design, decorated with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and amethysts. An auction on the following day is given over to another form of personal adornment, watches. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ Gems also rule the day at **Doyle,** which is holding an auction of estate jewelry on April 12 that includes several lovely Art Deco pieces. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)



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## ON THE HORIZON

## THE THEATRE
### FOOL'S PARADISE
*April 25*

Cirque du Soleil comes to Randall's Island with "Corteo," about a clown who imagines his funeral as a jubilant carnival. Expect spectacular acrobatics and theatrics, along with human sculpture and commedia-dell'arte puppet theatre. (800-678-5440.)

## MOVIES
### PIÈCE DE RÉSISTANCE
*April 28*

During the Second World War, the twenty-seven-year-old French resistance fighter Jean-Pierre Melville vowed to make a film of Joseph Kessel's 1943 novel, "Army of Shadows." He did so in 1969, casting Lino Ventura and Simone Signoret as underground warriors who face and dispense death with solemn practicality. The film is both historical and deeply personal. Film Forum is giving it its first American release. (212-727-8110.)

## ART
### PAINTING WITH JOHN
*May 1-Aug. 14*

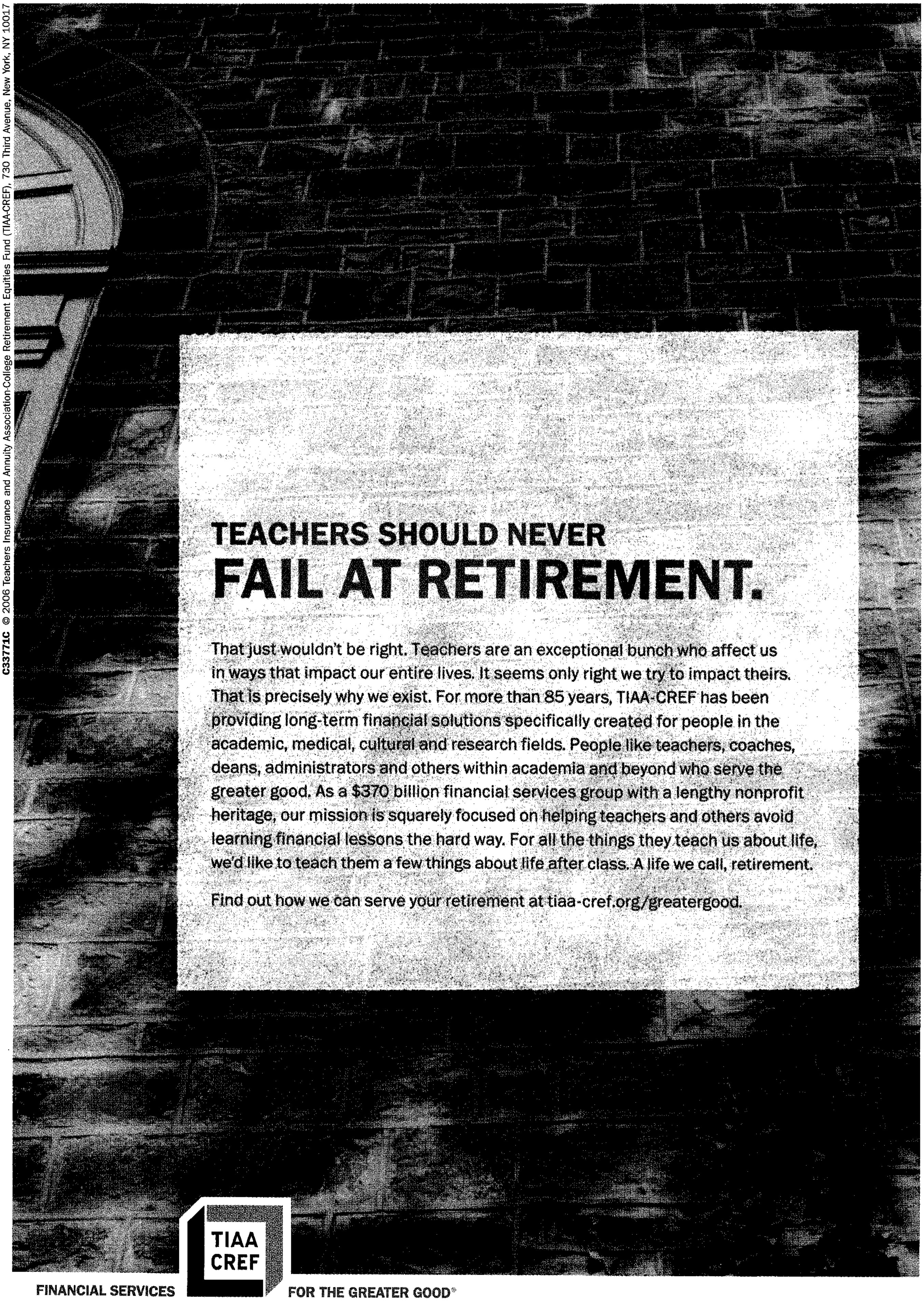
John Lurie—Lounge Lizard, actor, fisherman, consummate New Yorker—is also an artist. His first solo show in a museum, which opens next month at P.S. 1 and runs through the summer, features his works on paper, which often portray cryptic interactions between animals illuminated by epigrammatic titles. (718-784-2084.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC
### RHAPSODY IN BLUE
*May 3*

The New York première of Stephen Paulus's "Erotic Spirits," an orchestral song cycle featuring the soprano Deborah Voigt, is the highlight of the American Composers Orchestra's concert at Carnegie Hall. (212-247-7800.)

## NIGHT LIFE
### LESS THAN WILD
*May 19*

The hyper-successful electronic dance act Erasure recently cut "Union Street," an acoustic rerecording of songs from its two-decade career. The duo, which consists of the singer Andy Bell and the keyboardist Vince Clarke, is supporting the album with a brief, stripped-down tour next month. It starts in Nashville and ends here with a show at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. (212-874-5210.)



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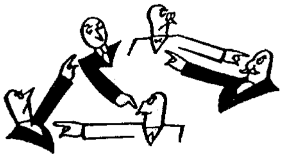
THE
NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
## CONSUMPTION



Perhaps you have been wondering who or what is to blame for the high cost of medical care in this land of ours—and, more broadly, for the ungainly, unjust mess that is the American health-care system. If so, wonder no more. Your government has fingered the culprit: it's "the vast majority of Americans."

The perp having been collared, the trial held, and the verdict rendered, only the sentencing phase remains. Providentially, our leaders have come up with a punishment that fits the crime. We, the guilty, are to be condemned—or invited, but in any case for the rest of our natural lives, without possibility of parole—to turn over our bodily well-being to "consumer-directed Health Savings Accounts" in conjunction with "high-deductible health policies."

This judgment was handed down last Monday, in the form of an article on the Op-Ed page of the *Times*. The piece was no Dowdy jestfest or Friedmanesque memo-to-the-mullahs, and not only because of the dreariness of its style and the banality of its content. Its author, Allan B. Hubbard, identified as "assistant to the president for economic policy and director of the National Economic Council," has lately emerged as the White House point man on health policy, and, in subsequent days, his Op-Ed proved to have been the overture to a veritable symphony of spin conducted by President Bush himself, including an Air Force One ride to Bridgeport, Connecticut, for a stagy "Panel on Health Savings Accounts."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Hubbard's article, headlined "THE HEALTH OF A NATION," begins with a frank-sounding acknowledgment that "in the past five years"—that is, since the present Administration took office—"private health insurance premiums have risen 73 percent," with the result that "some businesses" have dropped coverage altogether. "What is driving this unsustainable run-up in health insurance costs," Hubbard asks, "and how can we make things better?" Then comes what bloggers call the money quote:

> Health care is expensive because the vast majority of Americans consume it as if it were free. Health insurance policies with low deductibles insulate people from the cost of the medical care they use—so much so that they often do not even ask for prices.

Can this really be the Administration's view of the health-care crisis? That its root cause is that Americans are (a) malingerers and (b) freeloaders who perversely refuse to go comparison shopping when illness strikes? That we're *over*insured? Hard as it is to believe that this is what they say, it's even harder to believe that this is what they believe.

Health care is indeed expensive, but not because people are too quick to call the doctor when they experience a scary symptom or merely an annoying one, and not because some of them may bridle at entrusting their health to the lowest bidder. Throughout the Western world, health care is expensive, first of all, because it is expensive, and is bound to get more so as populations age and medical technology advances. Indeed, it *should* get more expensive, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of national income, because what it aims to provide—healing, the relief of suffering, the staving off of death—is of such inestimable value.

American health care is the most expensive on earth, but this, too, has little to do with overindulgence in seeking medical attention. (Overindulgence in cheeseburgers is another matter.) It has a lot to do with the waste built into what Paul Krugman calls our crazy-quilt health-care system, which has a lot to do with the fact that so much of that system is private rather than public, which in turn has a lot to do with two other factors. One is historical: during the Second World War, industry (with prodding from organized labor) got around wage controls by offering workers health benefits in place of cash, thus saddling the United States with "employer-based" private health insurance—a system now in slow-motion collapse under the competitive pressures of globalization. The other is institutional: even though there has long been popular support here for universal, government-run health care, as there is in Europe and Canada, America's fragmented political system—riddled with weak points where well-organized, well-financed minorities can thwart the unfocussed will of a majority—has been able to deliver only for seniors and, less generously, for the poor.

Medicare—a mixed system, under which the insurance function is socialized while the care itself remains in private hands—dedicates two per cent of its resources to administration. By contrast, the private health-insurance industry spends a fortune—more than ten per cent of its income—on administrative dreadnoughts devoted largely to vetoing treatments, sloughing off sick or potentially sick clients, and scheming to stick someone else with the bill. In the United States, we spend fifteen per cent of our gross domestic product on health care, close to six thousand dollars per person. The French and the Canadians spend ten per cent of G.D.P., about three thousand dollars per head. Yet their "health outcomes," measured by indices like longevity, are better than ours. If they spent the kind of money we do, they'd live forever.

Hubbard—who, by the way, is a finalist to be Bush's next Secretary of the Treasury—is an initiate of the cult of the market, which he evidently regards as the fundamental model for all human relations. For him, sick people who require care are "consumers." That word and its derivatives appear ten times in the eight hundred and fifty words of his *Times* piece. ("Patient" appears once. "Sick," "ill," and "under the weather" do not appear at all.) Accordingly, the solution that he and Bush are pushing—so-called health savings accounts—puts the onus on "consumers" to fend for themselves in the medical "marketplace." It's probably unnecessary to add that this solution would solve nothing. It would be yet another gift to people in the higher tax brackets, would undermine traditional insurance by pulling young and healthy people out of risk pools, and, with a fine evenhandedness, would discourage people from going to the doctor for real and imaginary illnesses alike. This is a worthy follow-up to the Administration's prescription-drug program for seniors, another excrescence of market cultism. The elderly had hoped for a straightforward benefit that would have allowed them to acquire, at some affordable price, the medicines their doctors prescribed. What they got was a parody of "choice," sadistic in its complexity, which forces them or their children or caretakers to game out which of dozens of private "plans" might give them access both to the medicines they need now and the ones they might unpredictably need in the future. The solicitude their government might have bestowed on them was reserved instead for the insurance and pharmaceutical industries. The Administration's message to the old and sick is the same as its message to the country after the September 11th attacks: Go shopping. Well, caveat emptor.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

## GOTHAM GOSSIP GOTCHA! DUNLEAVY SPEAKS

It was Friday afternoon, and Steve Dunleavy, the *Post* columnist, was in his usual spot at Langan's, an Irish joint on West Forty-seventh Street, his vodka-and-tonic untouched for now. Jesus Christ, he couldn't remember a week like this one. What was happening to New York? First came news that Yankee Stadium, the home of Ruth and Gehrig and Mantle and Stengel, had booked a date with the wrecking ball. Then, on Thursday, Louis Eppolito and Stephen Caracappa, two former New York City detectives, were convicted of murdering for the Mob—eight times, over a five-year period. (Dunleavy is an inveterate defender of cops, even ones who get into trouble.) That had been yesterday. And today this: a story in the *News*, on the front page, in two-hundred-and-thirty-point type: "PAGE SIX SCANDAL: N.Y. POST WRITER TRIES TO SHAKE DOWN BILLIONAIRE FOR $220G." "Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!" Dunleavy whispered, shaking his gray pompadour from side to side. When he first saw the story, at 6 A.M., he was standing on the doorstep of his house, out in Lido Beach, Long Island, and he thought it was a gag: somebody at the *News*, perhaps his old friend Martin Dunn, the editor, had mocked up a fake copy of the paper and sent it to him as a joke. "I said to myself, 'I bet I'm in here somewhere, on page 5, falling-down drunk,' " Dunleavy said. But, as he read on, he realized that it was for real. F.B.I. investigators had videotaped Jared Paul Stern, a longtime Page Six contributor, asking Ron Burkle, a California businessman, for a hundred thousand dollars up front, plus another ten thousand dollars a month, in order to keep his name out of the famous gossip column.

"It's the most incredible thing," Dunleavy, who began his career in journalism in Sydney in 1952, said. "Thirty or forty years ago, maybe there was stuff like this going on. Somebody would say, 'Put this story in and I'll do something nice for you.' And somebody would end up with a fur coat. But nothing as straightforward as this. What was the guy thinking?"

The *News* story was the talk of the bar, a regular hangout for people who work at the *Post*, which is situated in a skyscraper across the street. A few minutes earlier, Dunleavy had been talking with one of his pals, a former mobster named Johnny Lester, who had served a total of twenty-seven years for manslaughter and robbery. Lester asked him, "Hey, Steve, why don't you make me a reporter?"

Stern had worked for the *Post* for more than ten years, and, until he left the paper's office on Thursday afternoon, he had been occupying a cubicle not far from Dunleavy's desk, which sees less of him than the barstools at Langan's do. Although Dunleavy didn't know Stern very well—the gossip columnist preferred movie premières and fancy restaurants to Irish taverns—he had always admired Stern's English-style suits. "I asked him where he got his suits, and he told me he got them at outlets in Vermont," Dunleavy recalled. "Looking back, perhaps I should have thought twice about somebody on a *Post* reporter's salary wearing such expensive clothes," he went on. "He was always very polite, very pleasant. I swear: he never showed any signs of chicanery to me. The only thing I can say is that he went fucking nuts. He must have had some sort of mental breakdown."

Dunleavy paused and shook his head again. "Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!" he repeated. "I bleed for the paper, I really do." With that, Dunleavy took a drink, a long one. "On the other hand," he said, perking up a bit, "to some degree it legitimizes me. After reading that story, I think I come across a bit more positively. I've got into fights, and that sort of thing, but nobody has ever accused me of anything like this, of corruption or extortion." He went on, "I mean, I get every fourth drink bought for me. But you'd get that at any Irish bar, even if your name was Paul Spratt."

—*John Cassidy*

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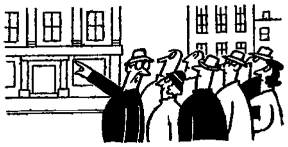
## MEDIA BABES
## DUBAI'S DIVAS-IN-TRAINING



Anticlimactic as it may have been, the news last week that Meredith Vieira would replace Katie Couric on the "Today" show marked the dénouement of a fur-flying, nail-biting, years-long game of musical chairs among television's leading ladies. Several days before the succession drama was resolved, a professor named Bernard Purcell found himself dealing with a similarly delicate logistical challenge, also involving a slew of attractive, ambitious media women. As supervisor of the Communication Technology program at Dubai Women's College, in the United Arab Emirates, Purcell had volunteered to chaperone a delegation of female students—aspiring reporters, newscasters, film directors, and graphic designers—on a fourteen-day visit to New York, as guests of N.Y.U.'s graduate film program. "Moving twenty girls around is hell," Purcell said. It was the first time any of the women had travelled to America. They financed the trip by appealing to the Crown Prince of Dubai.

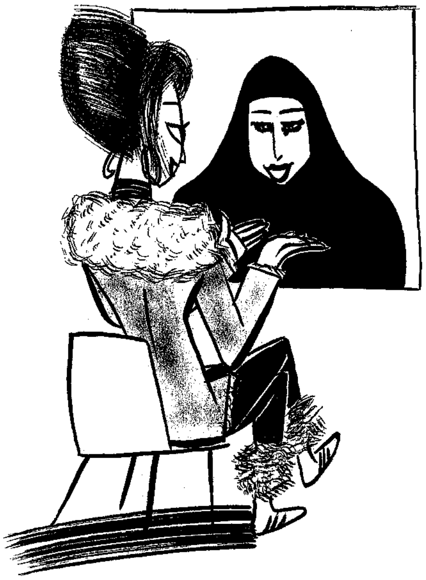
"We were at a career fair, and Alreem"—a glamorous and fearless third-year—"walked up to the Prince and asked him, in her best Arabic, 'Can you please pay for us to go to New York next year?' " Purcell, a sunburned Australian whom the girls call Papa, said the other day. Alreem Al Tenaiji (nicknamed Fifi) is Purcell's star pupil: she hopes to be a network presenter, and, in fact, with her benevolent yet royal air, she resembles an Emirati Diane Sawyer. On her fifth night in town, she was wearing a luxurious shearling coat, along with gold lamé high-tops and jeans embellished with fur cuffs. Her highlighted hair, instead of being covered by a black *abaya*, as is customary in the U.A.E., was styled in a buoyant blowout.

"What sizes do you have?" Alreem asked a salesgirl after wandering into a vintage boutique near the Washington Square Hotel, where the group was staying. She was holding up a long, neon-yellow dress.

"Um, that's the only size we have," the salesgirl said.

Across the store, a classmate fingered a pair of chandelier earrings. "These have been worn?" she said, before carefully returning them to the rack.

Vintage shopping, it became clear, was an unfamiliar concept for the Dubai women. Their country was founded in 1971, and, as one classmate said, everything there is new. (Another student said of the United Nations, which the group visited, "I think it's really old, right? Like from the nineteen-thirties?") Also remarkable to the visitors were: subways, the preponderance of dogs on the street, break dancers, "the city's wooden houses," Falun Gong protesters, art museums, musicals, the large crowds that go to musicals, Victoria's Secret, the *freeeeezing* weather, the fact that students and teachers can drink coffee in class, and a cherry-red two-door sports car. ("It's a Bentley. It's an Aston Martin. O.K., whatever. We should Google it.") While they embraced most aspects of New York culture with uncommon equanimity, getting around town without a car was, for the women, as trying as it might be for a morning-show diva. (As Katie Couric noted, during her on-air farewell, "It may be terrifying to get out of your comfort zone.") "What amazes me," a student named Alia Ahli wrote in a blog for her classmates back in Dubai, "is that the people walk; they actually move those things God blessed them with that are called legs and WALK!"



"These flat shoes are killing my back," a student named Safa Al Mazan said. Safa and Alia were sitting at Empire Szechuan, trying to decide what to eat, while trading platitudes on men and food. "Don't order Japanese in a Chinese restaurant," Safa said. "Good-looking guys are either married, gay, or dead," Alia said, demonstrating a highly marketable talent for producing sound bites on subjects about which she may have little firsthand experience. "I like metrosexuals. They're very clean." (Women in the U.A.E. are technically not allowed to date.) Safa fumbled with her utensils. "The chopsticks diet!" she said. It could have been "The View" in prime time.

A few days later, the class was scheduled to take over an N.Y.U. classroom for a video conference with their classmates back home whose parents had not allowed them to make the trip. At 9 A.M., the appointed time, they were nowhere to be found.

After about twenty minutes, the women appeared. They explained that they had accidentally taken the subway to Queens. Why were they on the subway, someone asked, if their hotel was only a few blocks away? A couple of the girls, it turned out, had got their first taste of the perils of public admiration: a strange man had placed a series of creepy phone calls to their rooms at the Washington Square Hotel. The delegation had packed its bags and moved uptown to the Essex House. "There is more security," Alreem said.

Through the video feed, a teacher in Dubai announced that a classmate's project, a photographic essay on child abuse, had been nominated for the Ibda'a Award, the U.A.E.'s most prestigious honor for young media talent. Everyone cheered. One visiting student said that they had succeeded in changing the preconceptions of some of their peers at N.Y.U. "Before, they thought that we were very sheltered girls and we were scared and we weren't going to talk to them and we're not funny."

That was Dubai Women's College, live from New York.

—*Lauren Collins*

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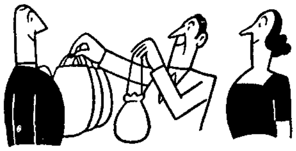
## INSIDE OUT DEPT.
## ZIPLOCK SECURITY



It is a matter of public record that bags—schoolkids' backpacks, mainly, but also women's handbags—are getting bigger all the time. An undocumented corollary is that bags are more plentiful, too—that there are more bags per capita on the street today than at any other time in history. If this is true (and if you go out right now and start counting you will be convinced within minutes that it is), possible explanations could include the proliferation of portable gadgets, a reading-material boom, a trend toward tight or pocketless clothing, or cheap bagmaking labor overseas.

But, much as nature finds ways (disease, famine) to combat overpopulation, city life has thrown up impediments to bags. To enter many public buildings, theatres, ballparks, and—theoretically, at least—subway stations, you must submit to a search or even go bagless. The city is a thicket of bag policies. It is hard to keep them all straight, and you're never sure, when leaving home for the day, whether it might be a bad idea to bring one along. One rule, at least, is easy to remember: you may not put a bag on a seat in a subway train. It will cost you fifty dollars.

Last week, the main branch of the New York Public Library got in the game. Students, researchers, writers, historians, idlers, hoboes, and anyone else who has grown accustomed over the years to treating the vast Rose Main Reading Room, on the third floor, as an office or a, well, reading room came up against a new decree. You are no longer allowed to bring a bag larger than eleven inches by fourteen inches into the library. If you walk in with one, you must leave it at the coat check. You may keep its contents with you, however, and the library provides big clear plastic ziplock bags for them. You return them when you retrieve your own bag (and after their visible contents have perhaps invited a "What's your major?" gambit or two). To enforce the eleven-by-fourteen standard, the coat-check attendant at the library has affixed two strips of masking tape to a corner of the counter, a crude version of those boxes you see in airports that help determine whether your carry-on will fit under the seat directly in front of you.

What the library is trying to prevent, in this case, is people taking things out, rather than bringing things in. "It's about collection security," Stewart Bodner, a research librarian, said on the second day. "It's a big switch for people who used to come and bring in half their apartment. The people who use the library responsibly will continue to do so. The people who steal will continue to get away with it, if they really want to. What I'm concerned about is the undecideds."

Last week, the library's grand entry hall, where the regulars were already accustomed to having their bags inspected on the way in (for weapons, explosives, booze) and on the way out (for purloined volumes), became an arena for clarification and disgruntlement. When the library opened on the third morning, a security guard, in latex gloves and big hoop earrings, broke the news to the bag-toters, one by one, as they performed the ritual of presenting their belongings for a once-over.

"Bags have to be checked in the coat-check room."

"Is that a new rule?"

"Yes."

"What am I supposed to do with my stuff?"

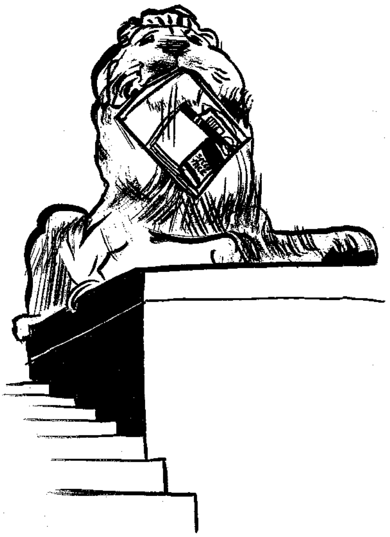
"Carry it."

"Carry it?"

"They'll give you a plastic bag."

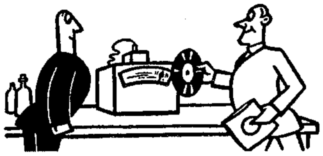
Some sighed, some sagged, some shrugged. After a few dozen catechistic variations, it became clear that the morning would be long.

A young man came in with a large backpack. It was stuffed to the seams with clothes and books. After the new arrangement was explained to him, he nodded. Then, instead of proceeding to the coat check, he started up the stairs: the day's first scofflaw. As he reached the third step, however, an empty water bottle fell out of his bag and clattered to the floor, the noise echoing through the marble hall. Busted. A pair of guards closed in on him ("Sir! Sir!") and escorted him to the coat-check area, whereupon he began emptying his bag on the floor and assembling things into two piles: laptop, fleece vest, an Old Spice deodorant stick. Of the fourteen books in the bag, two would be accompanying him upstairs: a biography of St. Bonaventure and a volume called "Apocalyptic Spirituality." He explained that he was a graduate student in theology at Fordham and that he was writing a paper on Dante's depiction of St. Francis. "Dante is usually considered an apocalyptic Franciscan," he explained, as he repacked his bag with the things he wouldn't need. "I'm saying he's more of a pseudo apocalyptic Franciscan. He's more in line with Bonaventure." He checked his backpack and headed upstairs.



—*Nick Paumgarten*

## REISSUES DEPT.
## HAGGADAH DA-VIDA



One recent evening, the composer Gershon Kingsley and his wife, Lillian, had some guests over to their apartment at the Parc Vendome, on West Fifty-sixth Street. The conversation centered on electronic music, which Kingsley pioneered in the nineteen-seventies. One of the guests was a young Englishman named Roger Bennett, whose company, Reboot Stereophonic, has just reissued a two-CD set of Kingsley's music called "God Is a Moog." It includes a piece called "Shabbat for Today" and an electronic operetta titled "The Fifth Cup," which is meant to accompany a Passover seder.

Kingsley is best known for the whizzing and whirring scores he wrote for Coca-Cola and Dunkin' Donuts commercials in the seventies, and for his pingy 1972 composition "Popcorn," which has been covered hundreds of times over the years (it was recently the basis for a popular cell-phone ringtone credited to a babbling cartoon character named Crazy Frog). But he composed music on Judaic themes, too. Kingsley was born in Germany in 1922 and escaped to Palestine in 1938. While living on a kibbutz, he memorized songs by Benny Goodman. He moved to America in 1946 and worked for Bugsy Siegel, as a piano player in the Flamingo Hotel; later, he was the organist for a Beverly Hills synagogue. After coming to New York, in 1955, and working as a Broadway conductor, Kingsley bought one of the earliest synthesizer keyboards built by Robert Moog. He went on to record some of the first commercially successful albums of electronic music.

Kingsley's hulking keyboards are set up in his living room, surrounded by framed photographs. In one picture, the young Kingsley sits at a keyboard as Leonard Bernstein looks on. In another, an even younger Kingsley can be seen playing with a jazz quintet: the image is captioned "One Jew and Four Palestinians (Arabs) Playing Jazz." The apartment's kitchen was out of commission, so the host was at a loss when it came to refreshments. A true New Yorker by now, he considered sending out for two cups of tea.

Wearing a snug black turtleneck and gray slacks, Kingsley sat down at his Apple computer and presented a short primer on his work. The music for a 1972 commercial for Hanes runproof stockings is mostly vocal noises modified by a Moog—"That's the stockings falling apart," Kingsley noted—while his score for a 1982 German production of "As You Like It" is a languid piece written for six cellos.

Bennett explained how he came to release "God Is a Moog." "Our label is dedicated to digging through the crates of the Jewish past," he said. "We found 'Shabbat for Today' on eBay for nine-fifty and then tracked Gersh down on Google. We called him up nervously, like two teens calling up Phil Oakey in the heyday of the Human League." The young producers paid Kingsley a visit and spent hours listening to everything on his iTunes. "Each piece of his was more magical than the next. He really wove a spell around us."

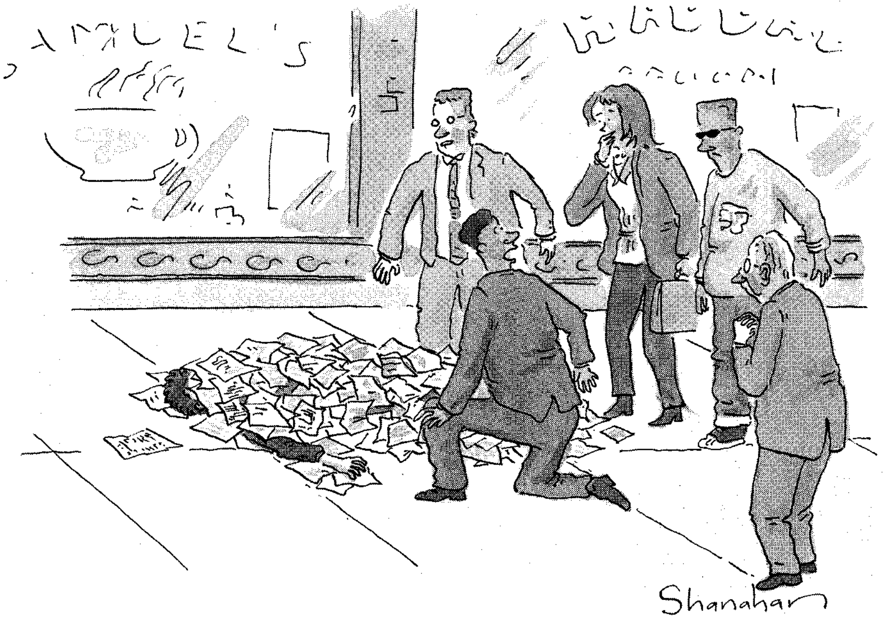
"They found some LPs of mine that I didn't even know existed," Kingsley said. "I thought they were crazy to want to put them out. But I thought, Maybe this is what the young people like today."

"Most Jewish music—'My Yiddishe Mama,' 'Sunrise, Sunset'—is hardly music you race to listen to on a voluntary basis," Bennett said. "And then you hear Gersh, sounding a little bit Kraftwerk, with a dash of Styx thrown in for good measure. If *this* was playing in synagogue, we would go every week."

The libretto for "The Fifth Cup" draws on a traditional Haggadah, but poses a grab bag of political questions, some recited by Theodore Bikel, who here sounds like Morley Safer impersonating Jim Morrison. Imagine "Hair" rewritten for a seder attended by the Weathermen. One cut, "Second Question—Bitter Herbs," brings to mind the music that accompanies a movie detective when he has to hop a fence to catch a thief. The lyrics are typical of the piece's metaphorical bent: "Bitter herbs are like prison chains that physically weave you into a hole, into a hole, into a hole, into a hole that ties your body and soul till your free spirit is through."

Kingsley is happy that his piece is being heard again, but he is not completely satisfied. "I would love 'The Fifth Cup' to be what I always hoped it would be," he said. "A Broadway musical." He went on, "Originally, in 1973, I was very close to making it happen, but the theater owners and I couldn't agree. I wanted it to flow as an hour-and-forty-minute piece, and they demanded that it have an interval to sell liquor and cake. I refused to break up the flow of the music."

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*



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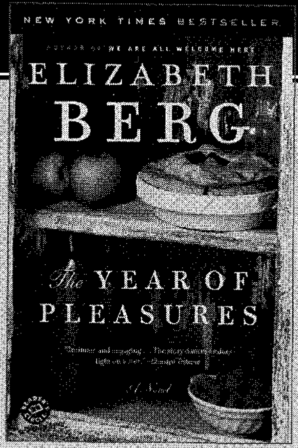

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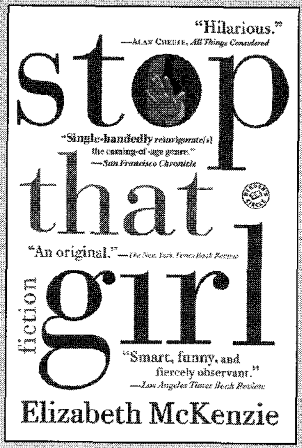
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ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

# THE IRAN PLANS

*Would President Bush go to war to stop Tehran from getting the bomb?*

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

The Bush Administration, while publicly advocating diplomacy in order to stop Iran from pursuing a nuclear weapon, has increased clandestine activities inside Iran and intensified planning for a possible major air attack. Current and former American military and intelligence officials said that Air Force planning groups are drawing up lists of targets, and teams of American combat troops have been ordered into Iran, under cover, to collect targeting data and to establish contact with anti-government ethnic-minority groups. The officials say that President Bush is determined to deny the Iranian regime the opportunity to begin a pilot program, planned for this spring, to enrich uranium.

American and European intelligence agencies, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (I.A.E.A.), agree that Iran is intent on developing the capability to produce nuclear weapons. But there are widely differing estimates of how long that will take, and whether diplomacy, sanctions, or military action is the best way to prevent it. Iran insists that its research is for peaceful use only, in keeping with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and that it will not be delayed or deterred.

There is a growing conviction among members of the United States military, and in the international community, that President Bush's ultimate goal in the nuclear confrontation with Iran is regime change. Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has challenged the reality of the Holocaust and said that Israel must be "wiped off the map." Bush and others in the White House view him as a potential Adolf Hitler, a former senior intelligence official said. "That's the name they're using. They say, 'Will Iran get a strategic weapon and threaten another world war?'"

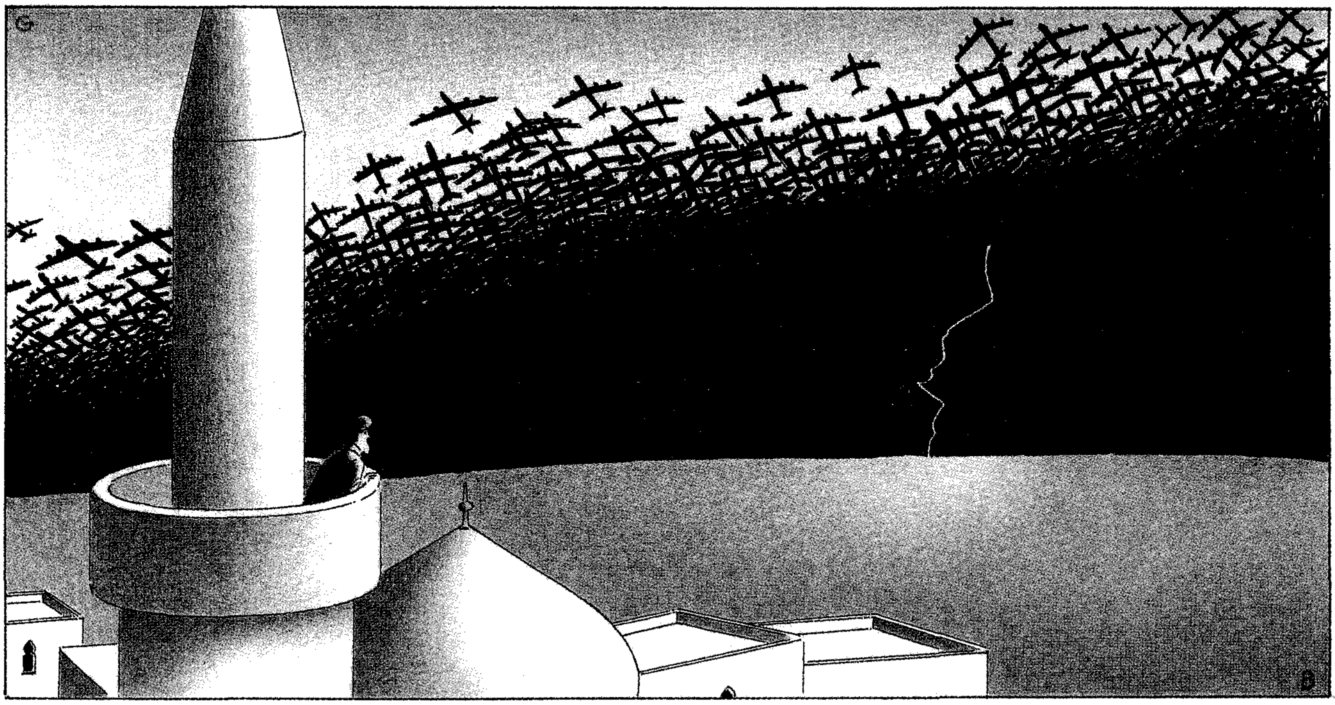
A government consultant with close ties to the civilian leadership in the Pentagon said that Bush was "absolutely convinced that Iran is going to get the bomb" if it is not stopped. He said that the President believes that he must do "what no Democrat or Republican, if elected in the future, would have the courage to do," and "that saving Iran is going to be his legacy."

One former defense official, who still deals with sensitive issues for the Bush Administration, told me that the military planning was premised on a belief that "a sustained bombing campaign in Iran will humiliate the religious leadership and lead the public to rise up and overthrow the government." He added, "I was shocked when I heard it, and asked myself, 'What are they smoking?'"

The rationale for regime change was articulated in early March by Patrick Clawson, an Iran expert who is the deputy director for research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and who has been a supporter of President Bush. "So long as Iran has an Islamic republic, it will have a nuclear-weapons program, at least clandestinely," Clawson told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 2nd. "The key issue, therefore, is: How long will the present Iranian regime last?"

When I spoke to Clawson, he emphasized that "this Administration is putting a lot of effort into diplomacy." However, he added, Iran had no choice other than to accede to America's demands or face a military attack. Clawson said that he fears that Ahmadinejad "sees the West as wimps and thinks we will eventually cave in. We have to be ready to deal with Iran if the crisis escalates." Clawson said that he would prefer to rely on sabotage and other clandestine activities, such as "industrial accidents." But, he said, it would be prudent to prepare for a wider war, "given the way the Iranians are acting. This is not like planning to invade Quebec."

One military planner told me that White House criticisms of Iran and the high tempo of planning and clandestine activities amount to a campaign of "coercion" aimed at Iran. "You have to be ready to go, and we'll see how they respond," the officer said. "You have to really show a threat in order to get Ahmadinejad to back down." He added, "People think Bush has been focussed on Saddam Hussein since 9/11," but, "in my view, if you had to name one nation that was his focus all the way along, it was Iran." (In response to detailed requests for comment, the White House said that it would not comment on military planning but added, "As the President has indicated, we are pursuing a diplomatic solution"; the Defense Department also said that Iran was being dealt with through "diplomatic channels" but wouldn't elaborate on that; the C.I.A. said that there were "inaccuracies" in this account but would not specify them.)



*"The problem is that the Iranians realize that only by becoming a nuclear state can they defend themselves," an adviser said.*

GUY BILLOUT

"This is much more than a nuclear issue," one high-ranking diplomat told me in Vienna. "That's just a rallying point, and there is still time to fix it. But the Administration believes it cannot be fixed unless they control the hearts and minds of Iran. The real issue is who is going to control the Middle East and its oil in the next ten years."

A senior Pentagon adviser on the war on terror expressed a similar view. "This White House believes that the only way to solve the problem is to change the power structure in Iran, and that means war," he said. The danger, he said, was that "it also reinforces the belief inside Iran that the only way to defend the country is to have a nuclear capability." A military conflict that destabilized the region could also increase the risk of terror: "Hezbollah comes into play," the adviser said, referring to the terror group that is considered one of the world's most successful, and which is now a Lebanese political party with strong ties to Iran. "And here comes Al Qaeda."

In recent weeks, the President has quietly initiated a series of talks on plans for Iran with a few key senators and members of Congress, including at least one Democrat. A senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, who did not take part in the meetings but has discussed their content with his colleagues, told me that there had been "no formal briefings," because "they're reluctant to brief the minority. They're doing the Senate, somewhat selectively."

The House member said that no one in the meetings "is really objecting" to the talk of war. "The people they're briefing are the same ones who led the charge on Iraq. At most, questions are raised: How are you going to hit all the sites at once? How are you going to get deep enough?" (Iran is building facilities underground.) "There's no pressure from Congress" not to take military action, the House member added. "The only political pressure is from the guys who want to do it." Speaking of President Bush, the House member said, "The most worrisome thing is that this guy has a messianic vision."

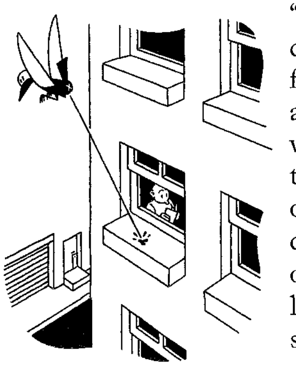
"The planning is enormous," the former senior intelligence official said, referring to the activity at the U.S. Central Command headquarters, in Florida; the Joint Warfare Analysis Center, in Virginia; and the U.S. Strategic Command, in Nebraska. "Space assets, SLBMs"—submarine-launched ballistic missiles—"tactical air, and sabotage, coöperation from the Turks and the Russians." He added that the plans include "significant air attacks on their countermeasures and anti-aircraft missiles—a huge takedown." He depicted the planning as hectic, and far beyond the contingency work that is routinely done. "These are operational plans," the former official said.

Some operations, apparently aimed in part at intimidating Iran, are already under way. American Naval tactical aircraft, operating from carriers in the Arabian Sea, have been flying simulated nuclear-weapons delivery missions—rapid ascending maneuvers known as "over the shoulder" bombing—since last summer, the former official said, within range of Iranian coastal radars.

Last month, in a paper given at a conference on Middle East security in Berlin, Colonel Sam Gardiner, a military analyst who taught at the National War College before retiring from the Air Force, in 1987, provided an estimate of what would be needed to destroy Iran's nuclear program. Working from satellite photographs of the known facilities, Gardiner estimated that at least four hundred targets would have to be hit. He added:

> I don't think a U.S. military planner would want to stop there. Iran probably has two chemical-production plants. We would hit those. We would want to hit the medium-range ballistic missiles that have just recently been moved closer to Iraq. There are fourteen airfields with sheltered aircraft. . . . We'd want to get rid of that threat. We would want to hit the assets that could be used to threaten Gulf shipping. That means targeting the cruise-missile sites and the Iranian diesel submarines. . . . Some of the facilities may be too difficult to target even with penetrating weapons. The U.S. will have to use Special Operations units.

One of the military's initial option plans, as presented to the White House by the Pentagon this winter, calls for the use of a bunker-buster tactical nuclear weapon, such as the B61-11, against underground nuclear sites. One target is Iran's main centrifuge plant, at Natanz, nearly two hundred miles south of Tehran. Natanz, which is no longer under I.A.E.A. safeguards, reportedly has underground floor space to hold fifty thousand centrifuges, and laboratories and workspaces buried approximately seventy-five feet beneath the surface. That number of centrifuges could provide enough enriched uranium for about twenty nuclear warheads a year. (Iran has acknowledged that it initially kept the existence of its enrichment program hidden from I.A.E.A. inspectors, but claims that none of its current activity is barred by the Non-Proliferation Treaty.) The elimination of Natanz would be a major setback for Iran's nuclear ambitions, but the conventional weapons in the American arsenal could not insure the destruction of facilities under seventy-five feet of earth and rock, especially if they are reinforced with concrete.



There is a Cold War precedent for targeting deep underground bunkers with nuclear weapons. In the early nineteen-eighties, the American intelligence community watched as the Soviet government began digging a huge underground complex outside Moscow. Analysts concluded that the underground facility was designed for "continuity of government"—for the political and military leadership to survive a nuclear war. (There are similar facilities, in Virginia and Pennsylvania, for the American leadership.) The Soviet facility still exists, and much of what the U.S. knows about it remains classified. "The 'tell' "—the giveaway—"was the ventilator shafts, some of which were disguised," the former senior intelligence official told me. At the time, he said, it was determined that "only nukes" could destroy the bunker. He added that some American intelligence analysts believe that the Russians helped the Iranians design their underground facility. "We see a similarity of design," specifically in the ventilator shafts, he said.

A former high-level Defense Department official told me that, in his view, even limited bombing would allow the U.S. to "go in there and do enough damage to slow down the nuclear infrastructure—it's feasible." The former defense official said, "The Iranians don't have friends, and we can tell them that, if necessary, we'll keep knocking back their infrastructure. The United States should act like we're ready to go." He added, "We don't have to knock down *all* of their air defenses. Our stealth bombers and standoff missiles really work, and we can blow fixed things up. We can do things on the ground, too, but it's difficult and very dangerous—put bad stuff in ventilator shafts and put them to sleep."

But those who are familiar with the Soviet bunker, according to the former senior intelligence official, "say 'No way.' You've got to know what's underneath—to know which ventilator feeds people, or diesel generators, or which are false. And there's a lot that we don't know." The lack of reliable intelligence leaves military planners, given the goal of totally destroying the sites, little choice but to consider the use of tactical nuclear weapons. "Every other option, in the view of the nuclear weaponeers, would leave a gap," the former senior intelligence official said. " 'Decisive' is the key word of the Air Force's planning. It's a tough decision. But we made it in Japan."

He went on, "Nuclear planners go through extensive training and learn the technical details of damage and fallout—we're talking about mushroom clouds, radiation, mass casualties, and contamination over years. This is not an underground nuclear test, where all you see is the earth raised a little bit. These politicians don't have a clue, and whenever anybody tries to get it out"—remove the nuclear option—"they're shouted down."

The attention given to the nuclear option has created serious misgivings inside the offices of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he added, and some officers have talked about resigning. Late this winter, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sought to remove the nuclear option from the evolving war plans for Iran—without success, the former intelligence official said. "The White House said, 'Why are you challenging this? The option came from you.' "

The Pentagon adviser on the war on terror confirmed that some in the Administration were looking seriously at this option, which he linked to a resurgence of interest in tactical nuclear weapons among Pentagon civilians and in policy circles. He called it "a juggernaut that has to be stopped." He also confirmed that some senior officers and officials were considering resigning over the issue. "There are very strong sentiments within the military against brandishing nuclear weapons against other countries," the adviser told me. "This goes to high levels." The matter may soon reach a decisive point, he said, because the Joint Chiefs had agreed to give President Bush a formal recommendation stating that they are strongly opposed to considering the nuclear option for Iran. "The internal debate on this has hardened in recent weeks," the adviser said. "And, if senior Pentagon officers express their opposition to the use of offensive nuclear weapons, then it will never happen."

The adviser added, however, that the idea of using tactical nuclear weapons in such situations has gained support from the Defense Science Board, an advisory panel whose members are selected by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. "They're telling the Pentagon that we can build the B61 with more blast and less radiation," he said.

The chairman of the Defense Science Board is William Schneider, Jr., an Under-Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration. In January, 2001, as President Bush prepared to take office, Schneider served on an ad-hoc panel on nuclear forces sponsored by the National Institute for Public Policy, a conservative think tank. The panel's report recommended treating tactical nuclear weapons as an essential part of the U.S. arsenal and noted their suitability "for those occasions when the certain and prompt destruction of high priority targets is essential and beyond the promise of conventional weapons." Several signers of the report are now prominent members of the Bush Administration, including Stephen Hadley, the national-security adviser; Stephen Cambone, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; and Robert Joseph, the Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

The Pentagon adviser questioned the value of air strikes. "The Iranians have distributed their nuclear activity very well, and we have no clue where some of the key stuff is. It could even be out of the country," he said. He warned, as did many others, that bombing Iran could provoke "a chain reaction" of attacks on American facilities and citizens throughout the world: "What will 1.2 billion Muslims think the day we attack Iran?"

With or without the nuclear option, the list of targets may inevitably expand. One recently retired high-level Bush Administration official, who is also an expert on war planning, told me that he would have vigorously argued against an air attack on Iran, because "Iran is a much tougher target" than Iraq. But, he added, "If you're going to do any bombing to stop the nukes, you might as well improve your lie across the board. Maybe hit some training camps, and clear up a lot of other problems."

The Pentagon adviser said that, in the event of an attack, the Air Force intended to strike many hundreds of targets in Iran but that "ninety-nine per cent of them have nothing to do with proliferation. There are people who believe it's the way to operate"—that the Administration can achieve its policy goals in Iran with a bombing campaign, an idea that has been supported by neoconservatives.

If the order were to be given for an attack, the American combat troops now operating in Iran would be in position to mark the critical targets with laser beams, to insure bombing accuracy and to minimize civilian casualties. As of early winter, I was told by the government consultant with close ties to civilians in the Pentagon, the units were also working with minority groups in Iran, including the Azeris, in the north, the Baluchis, in the southeast, and the Kurds, in the northeast. The troops "are studying the terrain, and giving away walking-around money to ethnic tribes, and recruiting scouts from local tribes and shepherds," the consultant said. One goal is to get "eyes on the ground"—quoting a line from "Othello," he said, "Give me the ocular proof." The broader aim, the consultant said, is to "encourage ethnic tensions" and undermine the regime.

The new mission for the combat troops is a product of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's long-standing interest in expanding the role of the military in covert operations, which was made official policy in the Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review, published in February. Such activities, if conducted by C.I.A. operatives, would need a Presidential Finding and would have to be reported to key members of Congress.

" 'Force protection' is the new buzzword," the former senior intelligence official told me. He was referring to the Pentagon's position that clandestine activities that can be broadly classified as preparing the battlefield or protecting troops are military, not intelligence, operations, and are therefore not subject to congressional oversight. "The guys in the Joint Chiefs of Staff say there are a lot of uncertainties in Iran," he said. "We need to have more than what we had in Iraq. Now we have the green light to do everything we want."

The President's deep distrust of Ahmadinejad has strengthened his determination to confront Iran. This view has been reinforced by allegations that Ahmadinejad, who joined a special-

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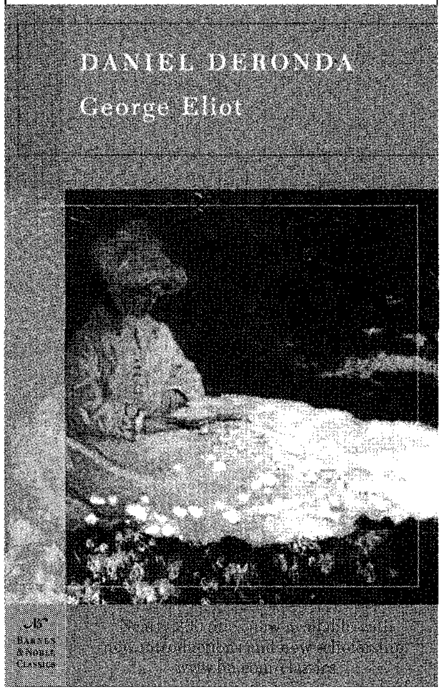

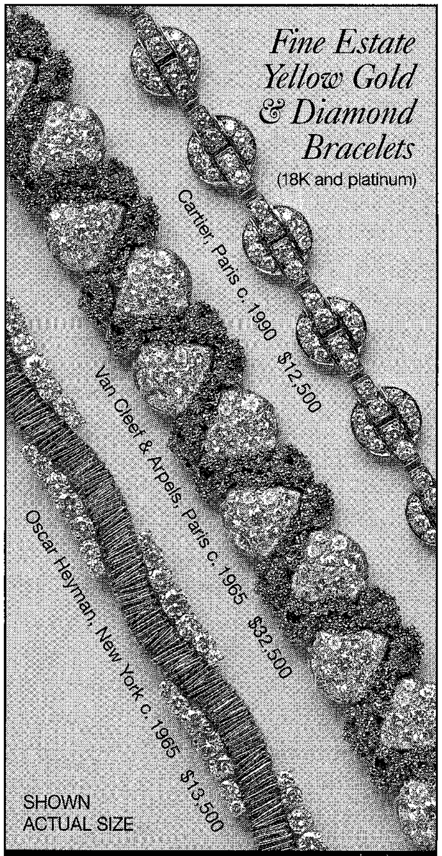
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forces brigade of the Revolutionary Guards in 1986, may have been involved in terrorist activities in the late eighties. (There are gaps in Ahmadinejad's official biography in this period.) Ahmadinejad has reportedly been connected to Imad Mughniyeh, a terrorist who has been implicated in the deadly bombings of the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, in 1983. Mughniyeh was then the security chief of Hezbollah; he remains on the F.B.I.'s list of most-wanted terrorists.

Robert Baer, who was a C.I.A. officer in the Middle East and elsewhere for two decades, told me that Ahmadinejad and his Revolutionary Guard colleagues in the Iranian government "are capable of making a bomb, hiding it, and launching it at Israel. They're apocalyptic Shiites. If you're sitting in Tel Aviv and you believe they've got nukes and missiles—you've got to take them out. These guys are nuts, and there's no reason to back off."

Under Ahmadinejad, the Revolutionary Guards have expanded their power base throughout the Iranian bureaucracy; by the end of January, they had replaced thousands of civil servants with their own members. One former senior United Nations official, who has extensive experience with Iran, depicted the turnover as "a white coup," with ominous implications for the West. "Professionals in the Foreign Ministry are out; others are waiting to be kicked out," he said. "We may be too late. These guys now believe that they are stronger than ever since the revolution." He said that, particularly in consideration of China's emergence as a superpower, Iran's attitude was "To hell with the West. You can do as much as you like."

Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, is considered by many experts to be in a stronger position than Ahmadinejad. "Ahmadinejad is not in control," one European diplomat told me. "Power is diffuse in Iran. The Revolutionary Guards are among the key backers of the nuclear program, but, ultimately, I don't think they are in charge of it. The Supreme Leader has the casting vote on the nuclear program, and the Guards will not take action without his approval."

The Pentagon adviser on the war on terror said that "allowing Iran to have the bomb is not on the table. We cannot have nukes being sent downstream to a terror network. It's just too dangerous." He added, "The whole internal debate is on which way to go"—in terms of stopping the Iranian program. It is possible, the adviser said, that Iran will unilaterally renounce its nuclear plans—and forestall the American action. "God may smile on us, but I don't think so. The bottom line is that Iran cannot become a nuclear-weapons state. The problem is that the Iranians realize that only by becoming a nuclear state can they defend themselves against the U.S. Something bad is going to happen."

While almost no one disputes Iran's nuclear ambitions, there is intense debate over how soon it could get the bomb, and what to do about that. Robert Gallucci, a former government expert on nonproliferation who is now the dean of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown, told me, "Based on what I know, Iran could be eight to ten years away" from developing a deliverable nuclear weapon. Gallucci added, "If they had a covert nuclear program and we could prove it, and we could not stop it by negotiation, diplomacy, or the threat of sanctions, I'd be in favor of taking it out. But if you do it"—bomb Iran—"without being able to show there's a secret program, you're in trouble."

Meir Dagan, the head of Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, told the Knesset last December that "Iran is one to two years away, at the latest, from having enriched uranium. From that point, the completion of their nuclear weapon is simply a technical matter." In a conversation with me, a senior Israeli intelligence official talked about what he said was Iran's duplicity: "There are two parallel nuclear programs" inside Iran—the program declared to the I.A.E.A. and a separate operation, run by the military and the Revolutionary Guards. Israeli officials have repeatedly made this argument, but Israel has not produced public evidence to support it. Richard Armitage, the Deputy Secretary of State in Bush's first term, told me, "I think Iran has a secret nuclear-weapons program—I believe it, but I don't know it."

In recent months, the Pakistani government has given the U.S. new access to A. Q. Khan, the so-called father of the Pakistani atomic bomb. Khan, who is now living under house arrest in Islamabad, is accused of setting up a black market in nuclear materials; he made at least one clandestine visit to Tehran in the late nineteen-eighties. In the most recent interrogations, Khan has provided information on Iran's weapons design and its time line for building a bomb. "The picture is of 'unquestionable danger,' " the former senior intelligence official said. (The Pentagon adviser also confirmed that Khan has been "singing like a canary.") The concern, the former senior official said, is that "Khan has credibility problems. He is suggestible, and he's telling the neoconservatives what they want to hear"—or what might be useful to Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, who is under pressure to assist Washington in the war on terror.

"I think Khan's leading us on," the former intelligence official said. "I don't know anybody who says, 'Here's the smoking gun.' But lights are beginning to blink. He's feeding us information on the time line, and targeting information is coming in from our own sources—sensors and the covert teams. The C.I.A., which was so burned by Iraqi W.M.D., is going to the Pentagon and the Vice-President's office saying, 'It's all new stuff.' People in the Administration are saying, 'We've got enough.' "

The Administration's case against Iran is compromised by its history of promoting false intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. In a recent essay on the *Foreign Policy* Web site, entitled "Fool Me Twice," Joseph Cirincione, the director for nonproliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, wrote, "The unfolding administration strategy appears to be an effort to repeat its successful campaign for the Iraq war." He noted several parallels:

> The vice president of the United States gives a major speech focused on the threat from an oil-rich nation in the Middle East. The U.S. Secretary of State tells Congress that the same nation is our most serious global challenge. The Secretary of Defense calls that nation the leading supporter of global terrorism.

Cirincione called some of the Administration's claims about Iran "questionable" or lacking in evidence. When I spoke to him, he asked, "What do we know? What is the threat? The question is: How urgent is all this?" The answer, he said, "is in the intelligence community and the I.A.E.A." (In August, the Washington *Post* reported that the most recent comprehensive National Intelligence Estimate predicted that Iran was a decade away from being a nuclear power.)

Last year, the Bush Administration briefed I.A.E.A. officials on what it said was new and alarming information about Iran's weapons program which had been retrieved from an Iranian's laptop. The new data included more than a thousand pages of technical drawings of weapons systems. The Washington *Post* reported that there were also designs for a small facility that could be used in the uranium-enrichment process. Leaks about the laptop became the focal point of stories in the *Times* and elsewhere. The stories were generally careful to note that the materials could have been fabricated, but also quoted senior American officials as saying that they appeared to be legitimate. The headline in the *Times*' account read, "RELYING ON COMPUTER, U.S. SEEKS TO PROVE IRAN'S NUCLEAR AIMS."

I was told in interviews with American and European intelligence officials, however, that the laptop was more suspect and less revelatory than it had been depicted. The Iranian who owned the laptop had initially been recruited by German and American intelligence operatives, working together. The Americans eventually lost interest in him. The Germans kept on, but the Iranian was seized by the Iranian counter-intelligence force. It is not known where he is today. Some family members managed to leave Iran with his laptop and handed it over at a U.S. embassy, apparently in Europe. It was a classic "walk-in."

A European intelligence official said, "There was some hesitation on our side" about what the materials really proved, "and we are still not convinced." The drawings were not meticulous, as newspaper accounts suggested, "but had the character of sketches," the European official said. "It was not a slam-dunk smoking gun."

The threat of American military action has created dismay at the headquarters of the I.A.E.A., in Vienna. The agency's officials believe that Iran wants to be able to make a nuclear weapon, but "nobody has presented an inch of evidence of a parallel nuclear-weapons program in Iran," the high-ranking diplomat told me. The I.A.E.A.'s best estimate is that the Iranians are five years away from building a nuclear bomb. "But, if the United States does anything militarily, they will make the development of a bomb a matter of Iranian national pride," the diplomat said. "The whole issue is America's risk assessment of Iran's future intentions, and they don't trust the regime. Iran is a menace to American policy."

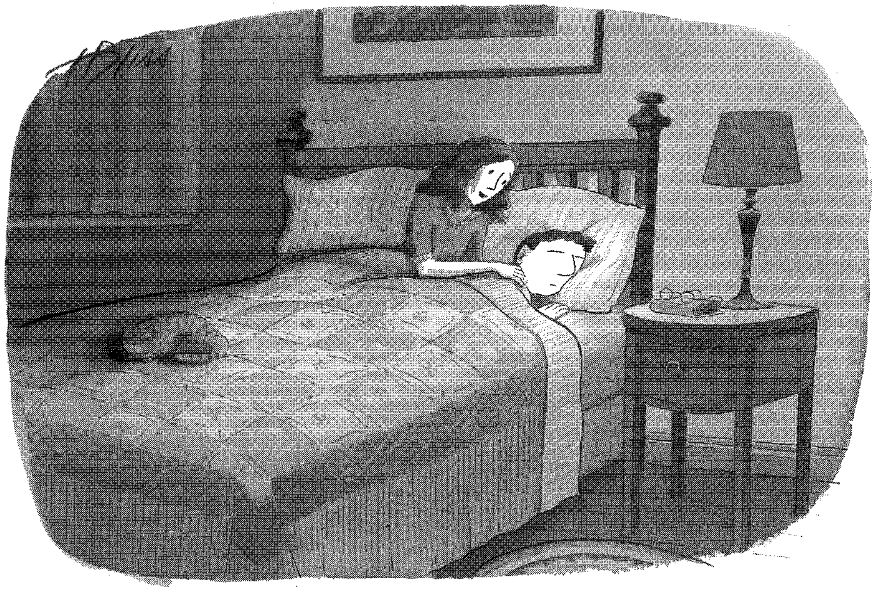
In Vienna, I was told of an exceedingly testy meeting earlier this year between Mohamed ElBaradei, the I.A.E.A.'s director-general, who won the Nobel Peace Prize last year, and Robert Joseph, the Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control. Joseph's message was blunt, one diplomat recalled: "We cannot have a single centrifuge spinning in Iran. Iran is a direct threat to the national security of the United States and our allies, and we will not tolerate it. We want you to give us an understanding that you will not say anything publicly that will undermine us."

Joseph's heavy-handedness was unnecessary, the diplomat said, since the I.A.E.A. already had been inclined to take a hard stand against Iran. "All of the inspectors are angry at being misled by the Iranians, and some think the Iranian leadership are nutcases—one hundred per cent totally certified nuts," the diplomat said. He added that ElBaradei's overriding concern is that the Iranian leaders "want confrontation, just like the neocons on the other side"—in Washington. "At the end of the day, it will work only if the United States agrees to talk to the Iranians."

The central question—whether Iran will be able to proceed with its plans to enrich uranium—is now before the United Nations, with the Russians and the Chinese reluctant to impose sanctions on Tehran. A discouraged former I.A.E.A. official told me in late March that, at this point, "there's nothing the Iranians could do that would result in a positive outcome. American diplomacy does not allow for it. Even if they announce a stoppage of enrichment, nobody will believe them. It's a dead end."

Another diplomat in Vienna asked me, "Why would the West take the risk of going to war against that kind of target without giving it to the I.A.E.A. to verify? We're low-cost, and we can create a program that will force Iran to put its cards on the table." A Western Ambassador in Vienna expressed similar distress at the White House's dismissal of the I.A.E.A. He said, "If you don't believe that the I.A.E.A. can establish an inspection system—if you don't trust them—you can only bomb."

There is little sympathy for the I.A.E.A. in the Bush Administration or among its European allies. "We're quite frustrated with the director-general," the European diplomat told me. "His basic approach has been



*"Honey, wake up! I just remembered something you did that annoyed the hell out of me!"*

to describe this as a dispute between two sides with equal weight. It's not. We're the good guys! ElBaradei has been pushing the idea of letting Iran have a small nuclear-enrichment program, which is ludicrous. It's not his job to push ideas that pose a serious proliferation risk."

The Europeans are rattled, however, by their growing perception that President Bush and Vice-President Dick Cheney believe a bombing campaign will be needed, and that their real goal is regime change. "Everyone is on the same page about the Iranian bomb, but the United States wants regime change," a European diplomatic adviser told me. He added, "The Europeans have a role to play as long as they don't have to choose between going along with the Russians and the Chinese or going along with Washington on something they don't want. Their policy is to keep the Americans engaged in something the Europeans can live with. It may be untenable."

"The Brits think this is a very bad idea," Flynt Leverett, a former National Security Council staff member who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Saban Center, told me, "but they're really worried we're going to do it." The European diplomatic adviser acknowledged that the British Foreign Office was aware of war planning in Washington but that, "short of a smoking gun, it's going to be very difficult to line up the Europeans on Iran." He said that the British "are jumpy about the Americans going full bore on the Iranians, with no compromise."

The European diplomat said that he was skeptical that Iran, given its record, had admitted to everything it was doing, but "to the best of our knowledge the Iranian capability is not at the point where they could successfully run centrifuges" to enrich uranium in quantity. One reason for pursuing diplomacy was, he said, Iran's essential pragmatism. "The regime acts in its best interests," he said. Iran's leaders "take a hard-line approach on the nuclear issue and they want to call the American bluff," believing that "the tougher they are the more likely the West will fold." But, he said, "From what we've seen with Iran, they will appear superconfident until the moment they back off."

## THE BIG FISH STORY

Late fall and not a soul around for miles.
Just me and my man. And those scallopers
trolling a few hundred feet offshore I'm pointing to
saying *no, non, nein, nyet, nej,*
in every language including body English,
to his idea that we take off all our clothes
smack in the middle of the lawn
in broad daylight and go swimming!
This is the line he throws me: "But, sweetheart,
the young have given up scalloping. Those
are all old men out there. Their eyesight
is terrible." Which explains why
I'm naked in the water off the coast
of Massachusetts on the fourteenth of October
and loving it, the water still summer warm,
feeling like silk, like the feel of his flesh
drawing over my skin when we're landed
on a bed, so I swim off out of his reach
lolling and rolling, diving and surfacing,
floating on my back for his still good eyes.
I know what he has in mind and what
I have in mind is to play him for a while
for that line I swallowed, delay the moment
I'll do a slow crawl over to him,
wrap my legs around his waist, and
reel him in—just the fish he was after.

—*Mary Stewart Hammond*

The diplomat went on, "You never reward bad behavior, and this is not the time to offer concessions. We need to find ways to impose sufficient costs to bring the regime to its senses. It's going to be a close call, but I think if there is unity in opposition and the price imposed"—in sanctions—"is sufficient, they may back down. It's too early to give up on the U.N. route." He added, "If the diplomatic process doesn't work, there is no military 'solution.' There may be a military option, but the impact could be catastrophic."

Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, was George Bush's most dependable ally in the year leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. But he and his party have been racked by a series of financial scandals, and his popularity is at a low point. Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, said last year that military action against Iran was "inconceivable." Blair has been more circumspect, saying publicly that one should never take options off the table.

Other European officials expressed similar skepticism about the value of an American bombing campaign. "The Iranian economy is in bad shape, and Ahmadinejad is in bad shape politically," the European intelligence official told me. "He will benefit politically from American bombing. You can do it, but the results will be worse." An American attack, he said, would alienate ordinary Iranians, including those who might be sympathetic to the U.S. "Iran is no longer living in the Stone Age, and the young people there have access to U.S. movies and books, and they love it," he said. "If there was a charm offensive with Iran, the mullahs would be in trouble in the long run."

Another European official told me that he was aware that many in Washington wanted action. "It's always the same guys," he said, with a resigned shrug. "There is a belief that diplomacy is doomed to fail. The timetable is short."

A key ally with an important voice in the debate is Israel, whose leadership has warned for years that it viewed any attempt by Iran to begin enriching uranium as a point of no return. I was told by several officials that the White House's interest in preventing an Israeli attack on a Muslim country, which would provoke a backlash across the region, was a factor in its decision to begin the current operational planning. In a speech in Cleveland on March 20th, President Bush depicted Ahmadinejad's hostility toward Israel as a "serious threat. It's a threat to world peace." He added, "I made it clear, I'll make it clear again, that we will use military might to protect our ally Israel."

Any American bombing attack, Richard Armitage told me, would have to consider the following questions: "What will happen in the other Islamic countries? What ability does Iran have to reach us and touch us globally—that is, terrorism? Will Syria and Lebanon up the pressure on Israel? What does the attack do to our already diminished international standing? And what does this mean for Russia, China, and the U.N. Security Council?"

Iran, which now produces nearly four million barrels of oil a day, would not have to cut off production to disrupt the world's oil markets. It could blockade or mine the Strait of Hormuz, the thirty-four-mile-wide passage through which Middle Eastern oil reaches the Indian Ocean. Nonetheless, the recently retired defense official dismissed the strategic consequences of such actions. He told me that the U.S. Navy could keep shipping open by conducting salvage missions and putting minesweepers to work. "It's impossible to block passage," he said. The government consultant with ties to the Pentagon also said he believed that the oil problem could be managed, pointing out that the U.S. has enough in its strategic reserves to keep America running for sixty days. However, those in the oil business I spoke to were less optimistic; one industry expert estimated that the price per barrel would immediately spike, to anywhere from ninety to a hundred dollars per barrel, and could go higher, depending on the duration and scope of the conflict.

Michel Samaha, a veteran Lebanese Christian politician and former cabinet minister in Beirut, told me that the Iranian retaliation might be focussed on exposed oil and gas fields in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. "They would be at risk," he said, "and this could begin the real jihad of Iran versus the West. You will have a messy world."

Iran could also initiate a wave of terror attacks in Iraq and elsewhere, with the help of Hezbollah. On April 2nd, the Washington *Post* reported that the planning to counter such attacks "is consuming a lot of time" at U.S. intelligence agencies. "The best terror network in the world has remained neutral in the terror war for the past several years," the Pentagon adviser on the war on terror said of Hezbollah. "This will mobilize them and put us up against the group that drove Israel out of southern Lebanon. If we move against Iran, Hezbollah will not sit on the sidelines. Unless the Israelis take them out, they will mobilize against us." (When I asked the government consultant about that possibility, he said that, if Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel, "Israel and the new Lebanese government will finish them off.")

The adviser went on, "If we go, the southern half of Iraq will light up like a candle." The American, British, and other coalition forces in Iraq would be at greater risk of attack from Iranian troops or from Shiite militias operating on instructions from Iran. (Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, has close ties to the leading Shiite parties in Iraq.) A retired four-star general told me that, despite the eight thousand British troops in the region, "the Iranians could take Basra with ten mullahs and one sound truck."

"If you attack," the high-ranking diplomat told me in Vienna, "Ahmadinejad will be the new Saddam Hussein of the Arab world, but with more credibility and more power. You must bite the bullet and sit down with the Iranians."

The diplomat went on, "There are people in Washington who would be unhappy if we found a solution. They are still banking on isolation and regime change. This is wishful thinking." He added, "The window of opportunity is now." ♦

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### ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

# NOT NICE

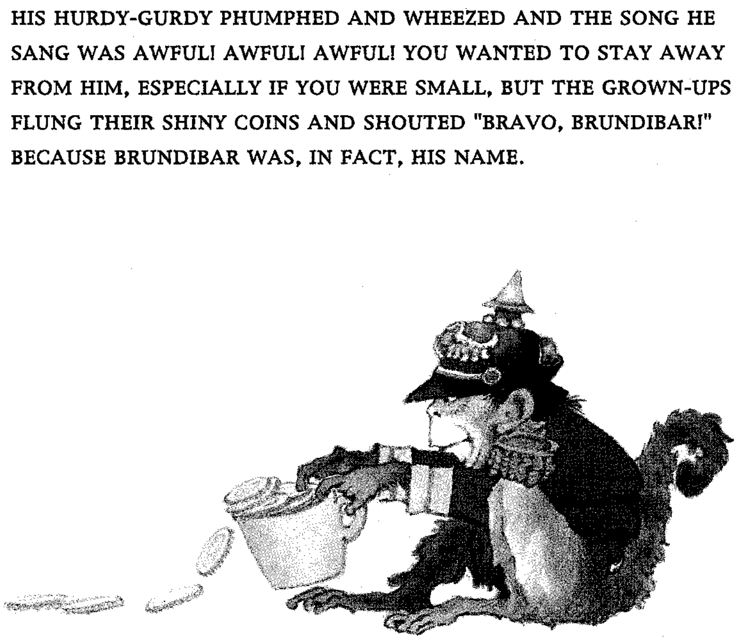
*Maurice Sendak and the perils of childhood.*

BY CYNTHIA ZARIN

Maurice Sendak, the writer and illustrator, can usually be found in one of two places in Ridgefield, Connecticut: in the studio off the kitchen in his eighteenth-century clapboard farmhouse, where he works most days, or a quarter of a mile away, in a small, two-story red barn he built ten years ago, which doubles as a second studio, and where he prefers to meet people he doesn't know very well. My first meeting with him was in the barn. I took a taxi from the train station, through snow-bleached woods, until the road became a dirt road. The taxi dropped me off in front of the barn, but when I knocked there was no answer. I had been told that the door would be open. It was locked. I waited, alone in the woods. About fifteen minutes later, a man appeared, wearing a long, buttoned-up shearling overcoat. He had gray hair, a cropped gray beard, and large, slightly slanted agate eyes. He walked with a cane and was accompanied by a German shepherd, like a man in a fairy tale. He put out his hand and said, "I'm Maurice Sendak." We went inside the barn, where it was a bit warmer, but we kept our coats on: the implication was that I might not be staying long.

On the floor was a round hooked rug with the face of a Wild Thing picked out in green-gold wool. Over the sink, instead of a mirror, was a pen-and-watercolor sketch of Little Bear flying across a moonlit landscape. By the north window was a bookcase painted a pale blue and filled with literature—Henry James, Melville, Shakespeare—the spines neatly aligned. (Later, Sendak told me, "Even my loneliness is organized.") When I went to look, Sendak said, "Now that I'm old, I am reading more seriously. I can read Emily Dickinson now. It's a relief and a privilege. This fall, I reread 'The Winter's Tale.' It turns out that the dead are not dead. Perdita, the lost girl, grows up in Bohemia. My hair stood on end." He pointed out a dilapidated wrought-iron bench that had belonged to his parents. He said, "My brother and sister and I sat on that bench and listened to 'Let's Pretend' on the radio. 'How do we get to Pretend Land?' And a little boy would say, 'Let's go on a boat!' We'd *stare* at the radio."

Sendak asked if I would like to take a walk. The winter had been mild, but the cold weather had returned. As we went up the road, he said, looking at an early patch of skunk cabbage, wilted by the frost, "Dummkopfs. You'd think they'd learn. Nobody learns!" When Sendak was young, his good looks were saturnine—he resembled the pop singer Eddie Fisher—but now, at seventy-seven, he looks more like his drawing of the winged servant, for Isaac Bashevis Singer's story "Fool's Paradise." (Sendak likes to say that his parents didn't take him seriously until he illustrated Singer, in 1966.)



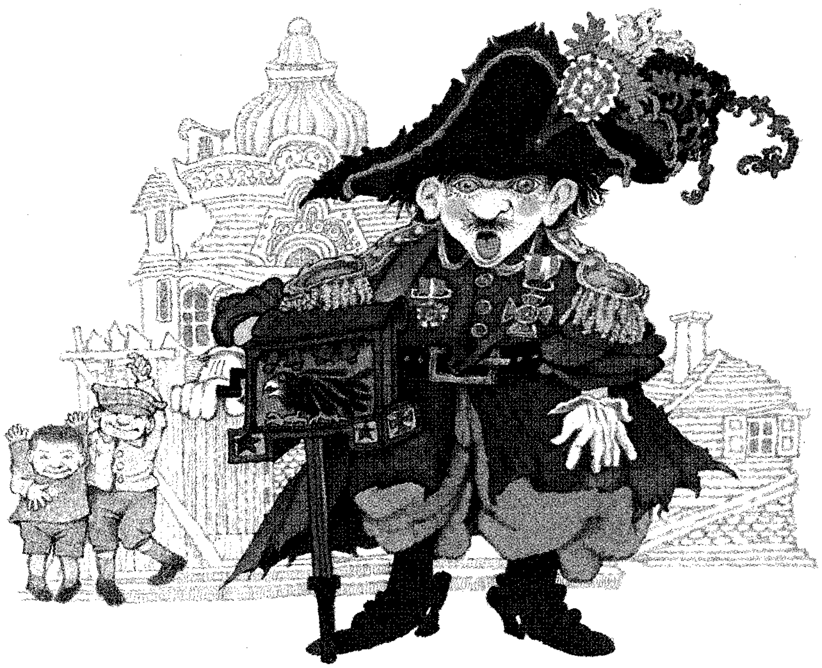
HIS HURDY-GURDY PHUMPHED AND WHEEZED AND THE SONG HE SANG WAS AWFUL! AWFUL! AWFUL! YOU WANTED TO STAY AWAY FROM HIM, ESPECIALLY IF YOU WERE SMALL, BUT THE GROWN-UPS FLUNG THEIR SHINY COINS AND SHOUTED "BRAVO, BRUNDIBAR!" BECAUSE BRUNDIBAR WAS, IN FACT, HIS NAME.

*Pages from "Brundibar," with text by Tony Kushner: "The job is to make ravishing scary book*

COURTESY MICHAEL DI CAPUA BOOKS/HYPERION BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Sendak published his first work in 1947, an illustration for "Atomics for the Millions," which was written by his high-school physics teacher. He drew molecules doing the Lindy Hop, and made a hundred dollars. Since then, he has illustrated more than a hundred books, including "Little Bear," by Else Holmelund Minarik, the first "I Can Read Book"; "The Animal Family," by the poet Randall Jarrell; "The Juniper Tree," a collection of Grimm fairy tales, translated by Lore Segal and Jarrell; and "I Saw Esau," a collaboration with the British nursery-rhyme scholars Iona and Peter Opie. His style encompasses homely thumbnail sketches and detailed drawings that have their roots in the work of Cranach and William Morris. When he began illustrating, he said, he was asked, " 'Where are your blond children? They look like dumbfounded immigrants!' Which they were." But it is the handful of children's books that he has both written and illustrated that constitute his autobiography. The best known of these is "Where the Wild Things Are," a book about a tantrum and a time-out, published in 1963. When Max, a boy dressed in a white wolf suit, is sent to bed without supper, his room becomes a forest, an ocean swells outside his window, and a boat takes him to a land where the Wild Things are—lumpish creatures who roll their eyes and gnash their teeth, and were based on Sendak's own relatives in Brooklyn. Max stares the Wild Things down; they anoint him king; and he reigns until, lonely and a little hungry, he sails home to find his supper waiting for him.

Like every Sendak story, “Where the Wild Things Are” explores his preoccupations, chief among which are the vicissitudes of his own childhood, and the temerity and fragility of children in general. His narrative is almost always about a child in danger whose best defense is imagination. The book editor Michael di Capua, who has worked with Sendak for more than forty years, calls this “*the* story.” In September, Scholastic will publish Sendak’s first pop-up book, “Mommy?,” about a baby who finds himself in the wrong house, and defeats one monster after another. “ ‘Mommy?’ is the story again!” di Capua says. The cartoonist Art Spiegelman told me, “Maurice reinvented what a children’s book is: it’s a book.”

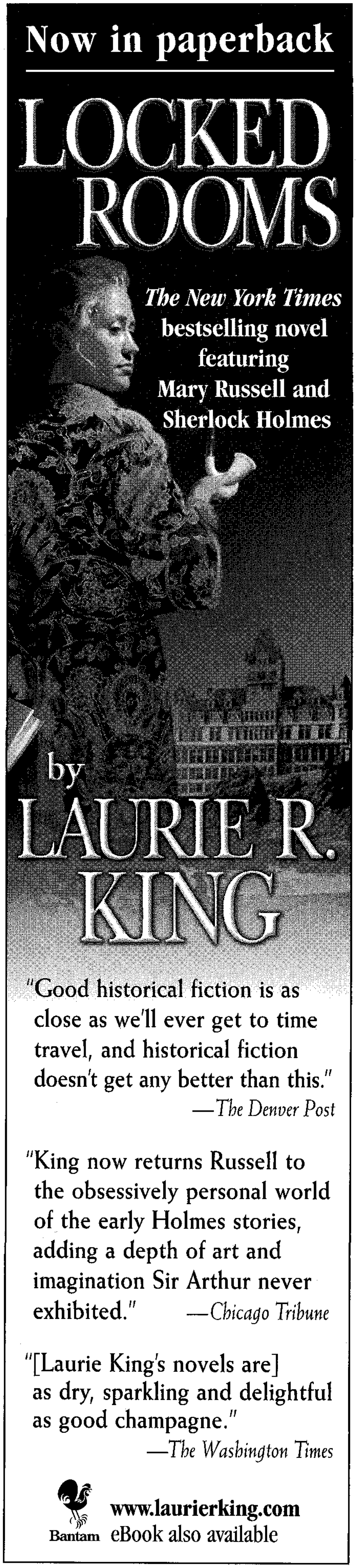


*ndak says. “I grew up with monsters. The invisible monster is the worst. Where is he?”*

HarperCollins, Sendak’s longtime publisher, estimates that there are about seventeen million copies of “Where the Wild Things Are” in circulation. Its success has allowed Sendak to pick and choose his projects: “Max is a useful child. What other four- or five-year-old allows his father to stay home and sulk?”

In the last two decades, Sendak has turned his attention increasingly to the theatre. For more than fifteen years, he was engrossed in a collaboration with the opera director Frank Corsaro; their work together included Mozart’s “The Magic Flute,” Janáček’s “The Cunning Little Vixen,” and an opera version of “Where the Wild Things Are.” With the writer and director Arthur Yorinks, he started the Night Kitchen Theatre; “Mommy?” began as a stage piece there. As an artist, too, he has veered away from the territory of children’s literature. In 1993, he illustrated the rhyme “We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy,” inspired, he said, by a trip to Los Angeles where he saw children living on the street; the pictures incorporate headlines about the AIDS epidemic. He has illustrated books for adults, among them Melville’s “Pierre” and “Penthesilea,” a homoerotic classical tragedy by Heinrich von Kleist.

After the publication of “Where the Wild Things Are,” the *Times’* art critic described Sendak as “one of the most powerful men in the United States,” because he “has given shape to the fantasies of millions of children—an awful responsibility.” Those children have now grown up. As a boy, the novelist Dave Eggers, who, with the director Spike Jonze, is adapting “Where the Wild Things Are” for the screen, wanted to be an illustrator, and one way he taught himself to draw was by copying the pictures in that book. “I read it and grew up on it and was scared by it. Max is in peril all the time,” he told me. “I know now that Maurice also feels himself to be imperilled. But I don’t think Maurice feels comfortable being safe. And I don’t think he wants his work to be thought of as harmless.” The playwright



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Tony Kushner read Sendak's books as a child, and he told me, "I wanted to *be* Maurice Sendak." They are now friends; Sendak played a rabbi in the HBO production of Kushner's "Angels in America," and Kushner wrote the text for the follow-up volume to Selma G. Lanes's "The Art of Maurice Sendak." He also collaborated with Sendak on the book and the opera "Brundibar." "Brundibar" and a companion opera, "Comedy on the Bridge," directed by Tony Taccone, premièred at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre last November; they open at the New Victory Theatre, in New York, later this month.

A few weeks after we met, I drove with Sendak from Ridgefield to New Haven for the first preview performance of "Brundibar" at the Yale Repertory Theatre (it played there in February and March). Sendak gave up driving several years ago, and Yale had sent a limousine to take him to the opera. Sendak said, "I wanted to be Mozart, but here I am, a wizened old Jew in the back of a hearse!" He looked out the dark window and said, "It was accepted, in my family, that everyone was nuts. My brother had his tonsils out, and after that he was convinced that the radiator pipes in the living room were going to fall on him. For me, it was the Lindbergh baby. A *goyishe* child with German shepherds to protect him—I thought the solution had been *to be* a *goyishe* child. My fear is ancient." (In Sendak's 1981 book "Outside Over There," goblins steal a baby whose face, on one page, he told me, is "an exact portrait of the Lindbergh baby.")

"Brundibar" is a children's opera, written in 1938 by the Czech composer Hans Krása, with a libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister, a Czech writer and critic. For this production, Kushner adapted the libretto, and the sets were based on Sendak designs. Sendak was nervous about the preview. "Tony called me up, and said, 'It's *fine*.' I said, 'I'll kill myself now.' " I'd been watching the rehearsals at Yale, and I told him that one evening the adult actors, listening to the children sing, were so moved that they missed their cues. "They missed their cues?" he said, with alarm.

"Brundibar" came about by chance. In 2000, a friend sent Sendak a recording of Krása's opera, which had first been performed by the children at the Vinohrady Jewish orphanage, in Prague, in 1942. Later that year, Krása and the children, along with most of the other Jews in Prague, were deported to Terezin, which was run by the Nazis as a "model" camp. Krása staged the opera there fifty-five times; it was also filmed, and scenes were included in a propaganda piece called "The Führer Gives the Jews a City." The libretto is a fairy tale about tyranny and kindness. Two penniless children, Pepicek and Aninku, try to earn money to buy milk for their sick mother by singing in the street, and are bullied by Brundibar, the local organ-grinder; after a trio of talking animals intercedes, a chorus of little children joins them in song, the coins pour in, and the bully runs off. Of the fifteen thousand children who passed through Terezin on their way to Auschwitz, only a small percentage survived the war.

Immediately, Sendak wanted to do something with the material. In 2001, he collaborated with the dance company Pilobolus on a piece set to music by Krása and others, called "A Selection," after the roll call at which some prisoners were sent to work and others to their deaths. In "Last Dance," a film on the making of the piece, Sendak, who can be obstreperous, suggests to the directors, following an afternoon fraught with disagreement, " 'Nazis Sending Jews to Be Cooked.' That's a good title."

Sendak asked Kushner to write the text for a picture book based on the opera. In the first set of drawings, Brundibar was Hitler, with a black mustache under a Napoleonic hat. "Children's literature, like the theatre, is telling stories with pictures," Kushner said. "In every conversation, Maurice produces something devastating. He'll kill me for saying this, but there is a quality in him that I find in a lot of Jewish people of his generation. It's amazing how much he has learned from reality." Sendak said recently, "Children know about death and sorrow and sadness. 'Brundibar' is about how children know that."

The sets for "Brundibar" were designed by Kris Stone. (As a child, she was obsessed with Max's room. She told me, "My friends are artists. When I see an installation sprouting grass, I think, Maurice!") Stone went through the book and found images—a little porch with scallops, a bucket belonging to Aninku—and when she couldn't find what she needed she used other Sendak images: the sky is from the Glyndebourne Opera production of "Where the Wild Things Are"; the moon is from a cover that Sendak did for this magazine in 1993. "In Terezin, the original set was very simple—a plank fence, a platform—but they did it that way because they were *in* Terezin," Stone said. "This is a universe he's dreamed. I think that a story in which children save their mother is very important, now, to that imaginative universe."

At the Yale Repertory, when the curtain came down, the audience was in tears. I went backstage with my six-year-old daughter. Sendak showed her the perch from which the beautiful yellow bird had flown down, and the painted bench where Pepicek and Aninku slept. Although the adults I spoke to about Sendak have often found him irascible, with a child he was gently attentive. (Later, he asked me, more than once, "Did she like it?") Then he said, to the waiting cast, "Thank you. That was wonderful. This was for Hans Krása. He only got one chance, and now you've given it back to him."

Sendak was born on June 10, 1928, in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, the third child of Philip and Sarah Sendak, Polish Jews who met in New York when Philip heard Sarah reading aloud a story by Sholem Aleichem. Philip worked in the garment industry, as a pleater. Maurice and his sister, Natalie, and his brother, Jack, were born on the dining-room table. Maurice, who was called Murray, was a sickly child. His grandmother made him a white suit of clothes, so that when the Angel of Death passed over the house he would not be taken: according to her, only angels wore white (Max's wolf suit is white as well). When he was very small, a photograph of his maternal grandfather hung over his bed; one morning, he awoke from a fever to find that the picture was gone. During the night, he had stood up and spoken to the picture, and his mother, convinced that her father was persuading him to come to the land of the dead, had ripped up the photograph. After she died, Sendak and his sister found the torn pieces packed away in a closet. (Sendak had the picture restored, and it now hangs over his bed.)

Sendak believes that Sarah suffered from depression. He recalled, "My mother had no ups. There was no pleasure in her life. Feeling sorry for her was my childhood." The one time that Maurice asked another child over to his house, his friend found Sarah strange, and asked, "Is that your mother?" Maurice said no.

Philip Sendak was more voluble—in old age, he dictated a book of tales from his childhood that Sendak illustrated, called "In Grandpa's House"—but his storytelling often cloaked an emotional violence. He told Maurice that before he was born Sarah had stood on a bench; Philip had repeatedly pushed her off, in an effort to terminate the pregnancy. "I would listen in fascination," Sendak recalls. "To him, it was a funny story." When Sendak repeats a line he finds ridiculous, he draws his circumflex brows together and raises his voice to a high-pitched squeak.

Was it the bench in the barn? I asked.

"No, it was not the bench in the barn!" he said.

Natalie gave him his first book, "The Prince and the Pauper." With Jack, he wrote and illustrated picture books. (Jack, who in later years worked at a post office, also wrote several books for children, two of which were illustrated by Maurice.) Every week, Natalie and Jack took him to a double feature. He was in love with Mickey Mouse. "When Mickey appeared on the screen, I would stand on my seat and scream," he told me. "The fun was how *not* nice he was. In the beginning, he had teeth; he makes a Wild Thing look like Shirley Temple." Mickey became the subject of his first finished drawing.

When Maurice wasn't at school, which he detested, or at the movies, he spent most of his time sitting at a window that looked out on the street, drawing. His first book, "Kenny's Window," published in 1956, is about a boy who sits by his window and answers a series of dreamlike questions ("What is an only goat?"; "Do you always want what you think you want?"). He had recently read "One Little Boy," by Dorothy Baruch, a psychoanalyst who was doing early work with autistic children. The boy's name was Kenneth. Sendak recalled, "I was blindsided by that kid, by his inability to communicate. Kenny's troubles suggested my childhood to me. I had been that lonely."

The cartoonist Jules Feiffer, who has known Sendak for fifty years, told me, "How close as adults we can get to the feelings of childhood is a mystery. But Maurice? He's been able to stay very close. Even the stories he hasn't written himself he informs and reveals. It's Chaplin eating his shoe in 'The Gold Rush.' It's depressing, but he lives, by eating that shoe."

Sendak's book "The Sign on Rosie's Door" (1960) is a series of gemlike stories about a little girl in Brooklyn who, through personality and imagination, turns a humdrum street into a play by Pirandello, and her friends Sal, Pudgy, and Dolly into players: "I'm Alinda the lost girl," Rosie says. "Who is going to find you?" Sal asks. "Magic Man." Sendak said, "I remember them all. I could see right into Rosie's house. We lived in apartment houses very close to each other. Next door, a little girl, Helen, was being abused. My sister and I would listen. Afterward, Helen would go down and play in the street. The doors were wide open. Everything was in code."

In the nineteen-seventies, Sendak went back to his old neighborhood with a camera crew, and knocked on Rosie's door. The person living there turned out to be Rosie's cousin. She gave Sendak a telephone number for Rosie, who still lived in the neighborhood, and he called her. "I said, 'Rosie, I'm the guy who used to be in the window.' And she said, 'Yeah, I remember, what were you doing?' And I said, 'I was drawing, and making things up about you.' "

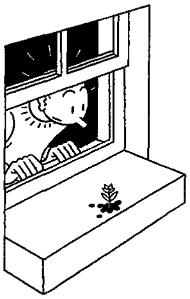
When Sendak was a teen-ager, the family moved four blocks away—"It could have been across the ocean." By then, their apartment was full of photographs of Sendak cousins in Poland—of newlyweds, of babies—who had been sent to concentration camps. Natalie's fiancé was killed in the war. Sendak said, "From that moment, I automatically began to take care of her. It became my full-time job." Every August, the family went for two weeks to Charlie's, a kosher hotel in the Catskills. In 1944, Jack was missing in the Philippines. That summer, Maurice befriended a girl named Pearl—her brother, too, was missing in action—and gave her his 1939 World's Fair ring. Jack eventually returned but, the next spring, Maurice received a postcard saying that Pearl was dead. "There was something wrong with her back; her mother had put her in the hospital for an operation she didn't want, that didn't help, and she caught an infection and died," he said. "You can die when you're a child, that's what I knew. Pearl was my Anne Frank." The dedication for "The Sign on Rosie's Door" reads, "Remembering Pearl Karchawer / and all the Rosies / and Brooklyn."

In 1946, Sendak graduated from Lafayette High School, where he had contributed cartoons to the school newspaper, and went to work at All-American Comics, drawing backgrounds for "Mutt and Jeff." He moved to the West Village, and studied with the painter John Groth at the Art Students League. "He'd say, 'Do a drawing of Marlon Brando fucking Vivien Leigh in "Streetcar." Do a Goya drawing, and do a Daumier drawing.' " Sendak taught himself to draw animals at the Central Park Zoo.

He was offered a job painting window displays at F.A.O. Schwarz. Frances

Chrystie, the children's-book buyer for the store, was a friend of the editor Ursula Nordstrom, of Harper & Brothers, whose list included Laura Ingalls Wilder and Margaret Wise Brown. Chrystie arranged for Sendak to meet her, and that led to his first assignment as an illustrator, for "The Wonderful Farm," by Marcel Aymé. When Ruth Kraus, another Harper & Brothers author, saw Sendak's sketchbooks, she insisted that he do the drawings for her manuscript "A Hole Is to Dig: A First Book of First Definitions." The definitions—"A face is so you can make faces," "Dogs are to kiss people"—had been contributed by nursery-school children. Sendak recalls, "She was writing the most original postwar books in America, but no one paid any attention, because they were 'children's books.' She was very strict with me. She said about my pictures, 'Why is *she* doing this, and *he's* doing that? Why can't *she* do that and *he* this?' There are more hermaphrodite children in 'A Hole Is to Dig' than in any other work of literature!"

Published in 1952, the book brought a flood of commissions. Soon Sendak was illustrating between four and six books a year, a surge of productivity that included, in 1957, the first Little Bear book. ("It was fascinating to watch him learn how to draw," di Capua said. " 'A Hole Is to Dig' is a triumph of experience over ability, but, in the Little Bear books, you see his draftsmanship magically evolving, until, in the last one, the illustrations are darkly exquisite.") In 1962 came the "Nutshell Library," which Sendak both wrote and illustrated, a set of four tiny books—"Alligators All Around," "Chicken Soup with Rice," "One Was Johnny," and "Pierre"—housed in a three-inch-by-four-inch slipcase. Disobedient Pierre, whose reply to every question is "I don't care," is a forerunner of Max.



Pierre's fate—he is gobbled by a hungry lion—was recalled to me frequently during my own recalcitrant childhood, and when we were walking through the woods I mentioned this to Sendak. He stopped and poked at an ice-bound rock with his cane, his face a mask of guilt and concern. "But he was fine! The lion threw him up."

The year after the "Nutshell Library" appeared, Sendak published "Where the Wild Things Are." *Publishers Weekly*, while praising the "frightening" illustrations, noted that they accompanied "a pointless and confusing story"; a librarian reviewer wrote, "It is not a book to be left where a sensitive child may come upon it at twilight." The book won the Caldecott Medal for the best picture book of 1963, but Sendak encountered the same mixture of condemnation and approbation with the publication, in 1970, of "In the Night Kitchen," in which a naked, gleeful little boy called Mickey narrowly avoids being made into a cake. Even into the nineteen-nineties, because of Mickey's nakedness, it was routinely banned from school libraries, but it now sells almost as many copies per year as "Where the Wild Things Are."

"The book *I* didn't like," Sendak said, was his 1959 edition of Hans Christian Andersen. "For me, he's too morbid. Why did the little mermaid have to bleed? Why did the girl with the red shoes have to die? I didn't know enough to stay away from it." He added, "I don't believe in punishment. Who in life gets punished? Not Pierre. In my books, Max is the only one who, in reality, does do damage. He pushes it too far. His mother is in emotional disorder, and he's pushing her to the limit. He *knows* her, and she punishes him. In the end, this will happen three times a week until he goes into therapy." At the same time, Sendak's friend Philip Roth was exploring a grownup counterpart of Max in Neil Klugman, in "Goodbye, Columbus," and Alexander Portnoy, in "Portnoy's Complaint," as was, in a minor key, J. D. Salinger—Kenny and Rosie coming of age—in his stories of the Glass family. Sendak continued, "We were all feeling hot. I brought to the industry the rebellious kid, because I came with a particular disregard for what a children's book was supposed to be. My God, Max would be what now, forty-eight? He's still unmarried, he's living in Brooklyn. He's a computer maven. He's totally ungifted. He wears a wolf suit when he's at home with his mother!"

In 1967, Sendak, then thirty-nine, suffered a near-fatal heart attack, the result of a childhood fever that had weakened his heart. On hearing of his illness, Else Holmelund Minarik sat down and wrote "A Kiss for Little Bear." Michael di Capua recalls that she thought that if she wrote another Little Bear book Sendak would live. In the story, the picture that Little Bear paints to give to his grandmother is of a Wild Thing. " 'Collaboration' is an important word to Maurice," Arthur Yorinks told me. "He's done it with writers, and then with himself, as an artist *and* a writer."

Over the years, Sendak had been approached many times by people who wanted to make a movie version of "Where the Wild Things Are." Only Spike Jonze and Dave Eggers, he says, showed any imagination. Jonze said, "What I've learned about Maurice is that, however wise he is, he's a kid. He's sad, he's enraged. He gets frustrated. When he gets angry, he bites back. Conversation with him is raw."

Sendak has shared the Ridgefield house for many years with his partner, Eugene Glynn, a New York psychiatrist who specializes in the treatment of adolescents. About rural life, Sendak says, "You know, I always knew I was going to leave New York. I had an accumulated yearning for the country. In 'Dark Victory,' Bette Davis went to the country to die. What I didn't know is that if you fall down in the road in Connecticut the owls pick your eyes out." Sendak suffers from insomnia, so he rises late. He tries to work every day. He spends a lot of time listening to music and reading, and he watches TV and movies that Spike Jonze sends him, which he usually hates. He likes to talk on the telephone: every Sunday, he speaks to his friend the choreographer Twyla Tharp for more than an hour. Every day, he goes for a long walk with his German shepherd, Herman—named for Melville—one of a long line of Sendak dogs, the most important of whom was Jennie, a white Sealyham terrier. Jennie is the heroine of "Higglety Pigglety Pop!" and is chased by Max in "Where the Wild Things Are."

Sendak's house is low-ceilinged and comfortable. A hallway leads to the sitting room, where there are two toy Borden's milk trucks on top of a bookcase. One of them was made by Lynn Caponera, who has been running Sendak's household for almost thirty years, since she was eighteen. Her name, like Jennie's, appears on marquees and signs throughout his books. Perched on a settee is a Rosie doll, wearing a red dress and black boa, which was produced after "The Sign on Rosie's Door" was made into a film, with music by Carole King, in 1975.

At lunch, we sat at a table crowded with memorabilia: a King Kong coaster, a postcard of Caravaggio's "Beheading of St. John the Baptist," and a solid-silver Mickey Mouse from the hood of a Ford. A garland of Mickey Mouse paper dolls hangs from a white wrought-iron chandelier. Sendak said, "You have to have the right people around." He also owns a Charlie Chaplin figure, given to him by the poet Marianne Moore, who was a neighbor of his on West Ninth Street; in the nineteen-seventies, Sendak would visit Moore and read aloud to her.

We were eating an apple crisp, and Sendak suddenly moved his fork from his right hand to his left hand. "This is delicious," he said. "See, look, if I like something I switch to my left hand." As a child, he was hit with a ruler for using his left hand; he draws with his right.

Robin Shane, the costume designer for "Brundibar," had said to me, "The opera should look like what people *think* the book looks like. Maurice always says that in his drawings the moon is the face of his mother." I asked Sendak about this. "It's true," he said. "The moon is always there. I must have it. My mother had a round, white face. She was always watching for me." He paused, then said, "Yeah, she's there saying, 'Murray, don't put your feet in the gutter—*not one foot!*' The moon is purity and love."

I said, "But you didn't feel that way about your mother."

Sendak barked back, "If I had a real mother and she made me happy, and a real father who made me happy, I would be working in the computer store with Max."

A week after the preview of "Brundibar" in New Haven, Sendak was sitting at the big table in the barn. An old oil painting of his was propped up in one corner. He said, "It's an early attempt. The figure is by Bruegel, the trees are by Goya. See how the Angel of Death has raised its sword over the old man? I could have stopped right there! The other day, a woman called me up—she had read something I said recently—and said, 'Maurice, you sound like you've overcome your frightful nightmares!' But what could have made her think that?"

Sendak had been on the phone all morning with Spike Jonze, who was trying to persuade him to come to California: " 'Maurice!' he tells me. 'You can stay at the *Bel-Air!*' Spike keeps sending me these sketches. It's driving me crazy." He put a piece of tracing paper over a Wild Thing that Jonze had sent him, and began to redraw its face, making the grin more affable and fixing the pupil in its lunatic eye. "Look at this! It looks like a victim of avian flu!"

We walked back up to the house with Herman, and made some tea in the kitchen. On the wall of the studio is a photograph by Lewis Carroll, of Alice Liddell as a young woman. Sendak said, "I like to think that he was angry at her for growing up: to get even, he took the picture when she slumped." On the desk was a reproduction of a skeleton of a Siamese-twin baby. On a shelf was a snapshot of Sendak as a boy, with Jack and Natalie. (Jack died, of cancer, in 1995; Natalie died, at eighty-five, in 2004.) Spread out on the drafting table is the working dummy for a new picture book, "Bumble-Ardy," an exuberant rhyme about a child who is finally allowed to celebrate a birthday when he turns nine.

"What I love is reading," Sendak said, sitting down at the table. "And air. Air when at night you open the window by your bed and the curtain lifts. Late at night, I am reading 'The Awkward Age.' James is poisonous. He is *venomous.* What I am doing now is wrestling. Do you know that beautiful letter that John Keats wrote to his brother about the making of a soul, the soul of the artist? I don't want to draw the soul. I just want to be in that life. I don't want to be a monster."

He raised his eyebrows, and said, "When my brother Jack died, I wanted to do something extraordinary for him. Five years later, I had an idea. The poem I wrote was very dark. I hope to finish it. But even if I don't finish it, or publish it, I did it. James's question is 'Why do you live?' " He paused. "The illustrations keep bubbling out." ♦

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PROFILES

# THE PROTEST SINGER

*Pete Seeger and American folk music.*

BY ALEC WILKINSON

It was the ambition of the singer and songwriter Pete Seeger, as a child, in the nineteen-twenties, to be an Indian, a farmer, a forest ranger, or possibly an artist, because he liked to draw. He went to Harvard, joined the tenor-banjo society, and studied sociology in the hope of becoming a journalist, but near the end of his second year he left, before taking his exams, and rode a bicycle north from New York through New England. He was tall and thin and earnest and polite. He would make a watercolor sketch of a farm from the fields, then knock on the farmhouse door and ask if he could trade the drawing for a meal.

In the nineteen-forties, Seeger was a member of a group called the Almanac Singers, which included Woody Guthrie. The name derived from their belief that many farming homes had two books: a Bible and an almanac. The Almanac Singers appeared mainly at strikes and at rallies held to support the rights of laborers. Seeger says that they were "famous to readers of the *Daily Worker*," the newspaper of the Communist Party. When the Almanac Singers broke up, Seeger played on his own for a while, then became a member of the Weavers, whose version of "Goodnight Irene," by Leadbelly, was, for thirteen weeks in 1950, the best-selling record in America. The Weavers quit playing in 1952, after an informant told the House Un-American Activities Committee that three of the four Weavers, including Seeger, were Communists. (Seeger knew students at Harvard who were Communists and, with the idea in mind of a more equitable world, he eventually became one himself.) Following the informant's testimony, the Weavers found fewer and fewer places to work. Seeger and his wife, Toshi, decided that Seeger should sing for any audience that would have him. They printed a brochure and sent it to summer camps, colleges, schools, churches, and any organization that they thought might be sympathetic. Seeger began engaging in what he calls "guerrilla cultural tactics." Arriving in a town he'd been hired to play in, he'd call the local radio station, where the disk jockey, remembering the Weavers, would usually invite him to talk on the air. Seeger would discuss his concert, then play that night, and be gone before anyone had time to object. In towns where his appearances were more widely publicized, he grew accustomed to pickets with signs saying things such as "Khrushchev's Songbird." In "How Can I Keep from Singing," a biography of Seeger, David Dunaway writes that a poll conducted during the period by Harvard said that fifty-two per cent of the American people thought Communists should be put in jail.

A promoter brought the Weavers back together in 1955 for a concert at Carnegie Hall—he had told each of them that the others wanted to do it. The concert sold out, and they began performing together again. Seeger left them in 1957. One of the songs from their catalogue, "Pay Me My Money Down," the lament of an indignant sailor, appears on "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions," Bruce Springsteen's new record, which will be released on April 25th. The other songs on the record are versions of folk songs that Seeger recorded and tended to sing on his own.

Springsteen began listening to Seeger in 1997, when he was asked to provide a song for a Seeger tribute record. To choose one, he told me, he "went to the record store and bought every Pete record they had. I really immersed myself

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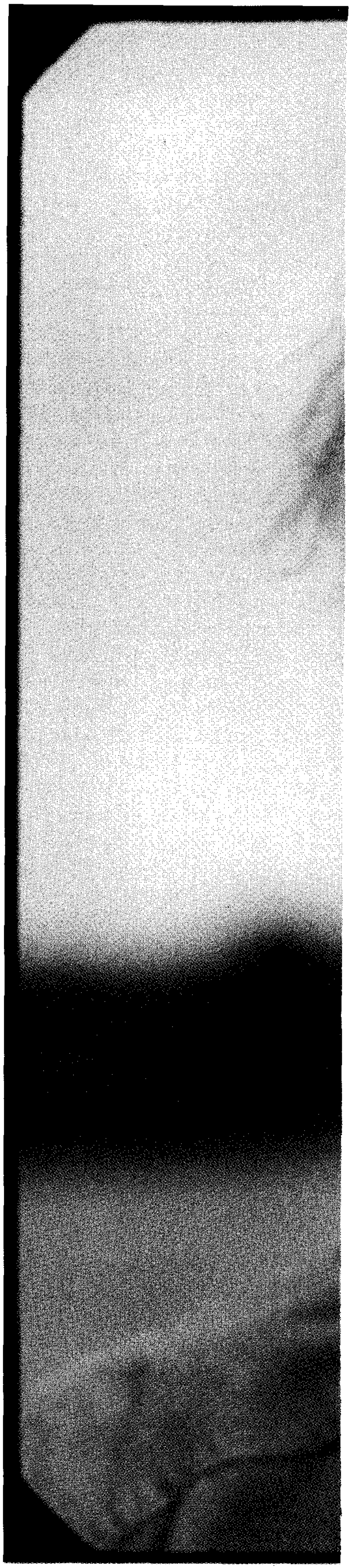
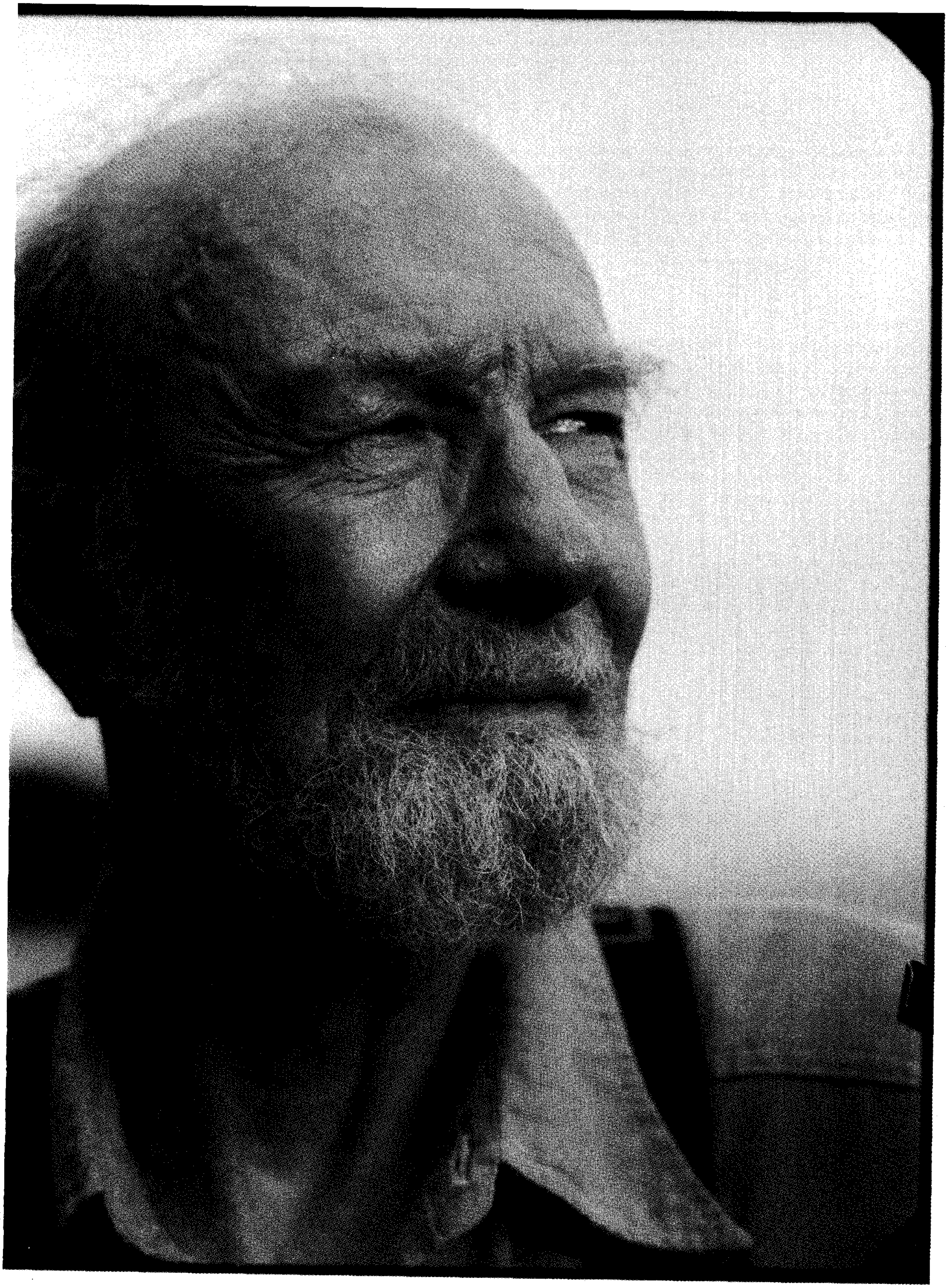
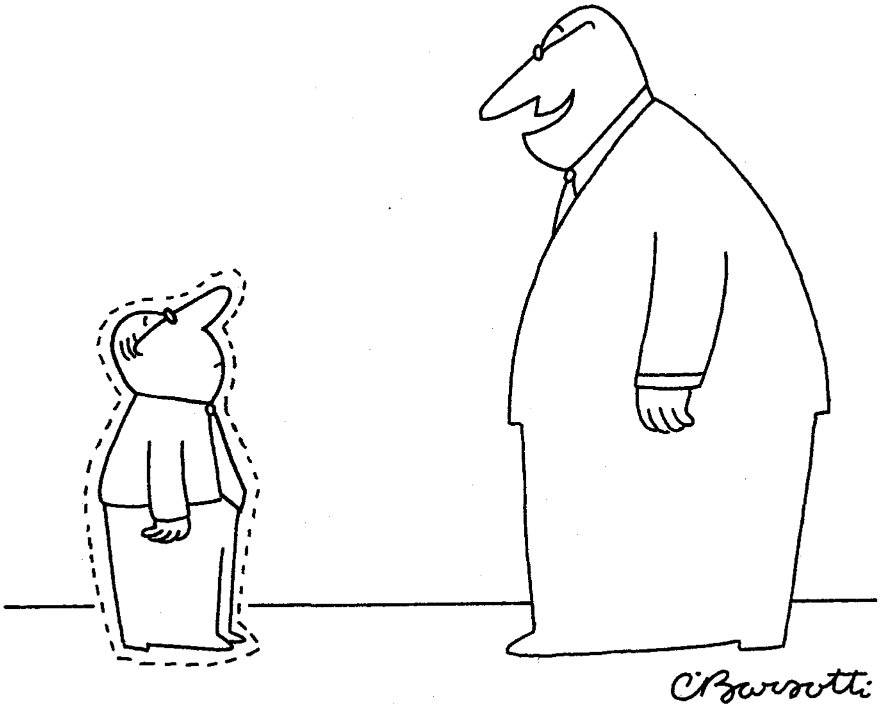


*"The whole history of the country is there," Bruce Springsteen, who is releasing a CD of Seeger's songs, said. "He transformed everything." Photograph by Annie Leibovitz.*



in them, and it was very transformative. I heard a hundred voices in those old folk songs, and stories from across the span of American history—parlor music, church music, tavern music, street and gutter music. I felt the connection almost intuitively, and that certain things needed to be carried on; I wanted to continue doing things that Pete had passed down and put his hand on. He had a real sense of the musician as historical entity—of being a link in the thread of people who sing in others' voices and carry the tradition forward—and of the songwriter, in the daily history of the place he lived, that songs were tools, and, without sounding *too* pretentious, righteous implements when connected to historical consciousness. At the same time, Pete always maintained a tremendous sense of fun and lightness, which is where his grace manifested itself. It was cross-generational. He played for anyone who would listen. He played a lot for kids. When I set the musicians up in my house to make this record, and we started playing Pete's songs, my daughter said, 'That sounds like fun—what is that?' "

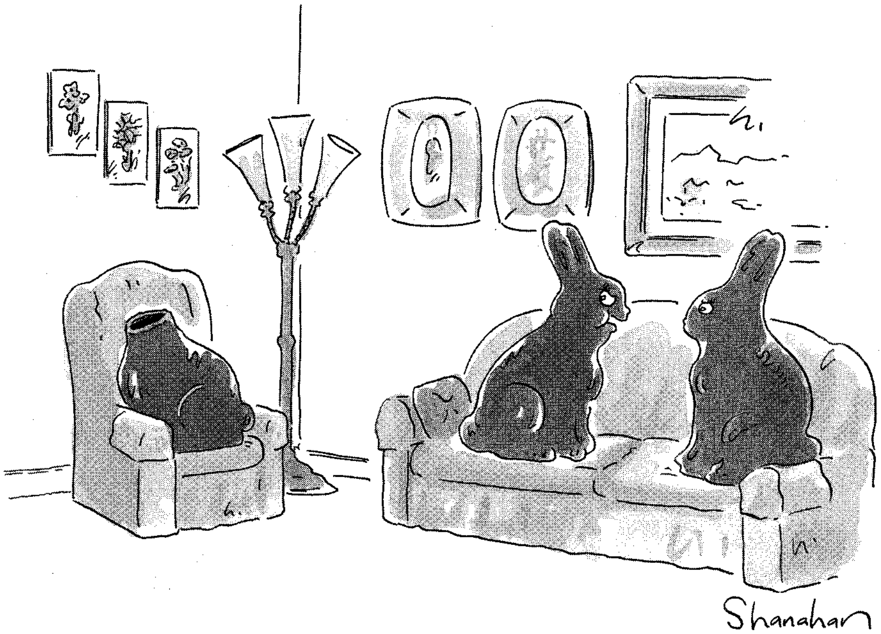
Seeger typically performed with the simplest instrumentation—by himself, with banjo and guitar, and, in the Weavers, with another guitar player. Springsteen is accompanied by drums, bass, piano, guitar, accordion, banjo, double fiddles, horns, and backup singers. His versions include more references than Seeger's did—Dixieland, Gospel, string-band music, rhythm and blues, and rock and roll among them. It is as if folk music, temporarily dormant, had been revived in a more populist and modern form. "The Seeger Sessions" does not include any songs that Seeger wrote, such as "Turn! Turn! Turn!" which was a No. 1 record for the Byrds in 1965. Springsteen recorded "If I Had a Hammer," but felt that it asserted itself too forcefully among the other songs, possibly because it was so well known. The songs he chose, he said, are "ones that I heard my own voice in. When you're going through material that way, you're always trying to find your place in the story. With the songs I picked, I knew who those characters were, and I knew what I wanted to say through them to transform what we were doing. That's your part in the passing down of that music. You have to know what you're adding. Every time a folk song gets sung, something gets added to that song. Why did I pick Pete Seeger songs instead of songs by the Carter Family or Johnny Cash or the Stanley Brothers? Because Pete's library is so vast that the whole history of the country is there. I didn't feel I had to go to someone else's records. It was very broad. He listened to everything and collected everything and transformed everything. Everything I wanted, I found there."



*"Our plans? Of course you're in our plans."*

Seeger is eighty-six—he was born in May of 1919. He and his wife, Toshi, who is half Japanese, live in Beacon, New York, about sixty miles north of Manhattan. They have been married for sixty-three years. Their house is remote and surrounded by woods. Seeger chops wood almost every day and complains when he can't. The woods around the house are so clean that it is as if someone had gone through them with a broom. Trying to recall a name or a fact, he sometimes places his hand over his forehead and closes his eyes. When he speaks at any length, he tends to look into the middle distance, as if reading the words there. He has a sharp nose and full, round cheeks. His eyes are blue and heavily lidded and so small that he seems to be regarding a person from some remove. His conversation passes quickly from one subject to another, as if many things were occurring to him at once. He never aspired to a career as a singer, and he dislikes being so well known. Celebrity, he thinks, comes for most people at the expense of others, whose accomplishments are more practical and serious. He and Bruce Springsteen met several years ago, either at a tribute to Woody Guthrie or at the Grammys; Springsteen thinks the former, and Seeger the latter. Seeger is pleased that Springsteen, whom he regards as a friend, has recorded songs from his past—he thinks they're good songs, and he is gratified by the thought that people will hear them—but he is not looking forward to the mail and the attention that will follow. He has work he wants to do. He gets so many letters as it is that he can answer them only with postcards. His nature is almost unflaggingly hopeful, but a line of melancholy runs through it. Once, after a performance in Spain that didn't go well, he wrote in a journal, "I seem to stagger about this agonized world as a clown, dressed in happiness, hoping to reach the hearts and minds of the young. When newspaper reporters ask me what effect my songs have, I try and make a brave reply, but I am really not so certain."

When Seeger was younger, his singing voice fell between the range of an alto and a tenor—what he calls a split tenor. It was robust, and even in complicated passages his pitch was precise. He had a dramatic falsetto that he could deliver as a moan or a shout. He sang without vibrato or with only an occasional trace of it. His phrasing was subtle but resourceful, enough to inflect meaning and character, and to enliven a narrative, but not so much as to deflect the listener toward the singer's personality. His presence onstage was confident, offhand, and compelling, but he regarded any attention paid him as a performer to be misplaced. He considered a singer to be a tool for a song. He believes that songs can make people feel powerful when they aren't by any measure except their own determination. As a young man, he embraced the conviction that songs are a way of binding people to a cause. A piece of writing may be read once or twice; a song is sung over and over. Performing, he did not expect the audience to attend to him so much as he tried to engage *them.* Seeger felt that folk songs sounded best when sung by a crowd, and whenever he could he tried to persuade people to sing with him. Every word in every song he ever sang was intelligible, which had a lot to do with the force of his performances. The issue at stake, he says, between him and Bob Dylan at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, when he said that he wished he had an axe to cut the cord to Dylan's microphone, was not that Dylan had performed with electric instruments—there were no prohibitions against them, he points out; the Paul Butterfield Blues Band had been hired for the festival—but that no one could hear the words to Dylan's song. "It was a good song, too," Seeger says. " 'Maggie's Farm.' " He was sure that Dylan wanted the audience to hear the words—or what would be the purpose of singing the song—and that the people in charge of the microphones were failing him.



*"Hollow—just as I've always suspected."*

Folk songs frequently contain every kind of trouble and harm. A lot are about shipwrecks and strikes and mine collapses and heroes dying by the hands of cowards. Often, they are songs that people sang to themselves or with their neighbors to commemorate a disaster or to give themselves courage or to console themselves for losses and defeats and suffering and hardship. Sometimes they celebrate victories, but typically there is more misfortune than triumph. They have a lot of dark corners. They don't muse so much. They don't describe life from a balcony overlooking a harbor from which the boat is departing at sunset with your sweetheart. The folk-song version of that is we-were-to-wed, but-I-killed-her-instead. They can go on and on. Dylan's recordings of songs that were ten minutes long, verse upon verse, were radical in the context of rock and roll, but he was making use of a conventional folk-music form. It is no observation of my own that Seeger did more to make people aware of folk music in the middle of the twentieth century than any other performer. Not that everyone thanked him for it. David Dunaway writes that purists often resented Seeger's influence. Folk songs, they believed, were the product of refinements made by different singers in different places. A true folksinger knew not only the way a song was sung in Kentucky but also its variations in Oklahoma and Tennessee, not to mention its antecedents in Wales. Once Seeger recorded a song, they said, his version became so widely known that it effaced the others.

Seeger hasn't made a record or sung a concert by himself for several years—his voice is no longer reliable; he thinks he overused it—but he remains an accomplished banjo player and guitarist. Last week, he recorded some tracks in his living room, with his half brother, the old-time musician Mike Seeger, and the guitarist Ry Cooder, for a project of Cooder's. In March, I heard him sing several songs for an afternoon assembly of schoolchildren in Beacon. At the assembly, I sat next to Toshi. The children sat cross-legged on the floor. The principal introduced Seeger by saying, "He's probably the person who's done more for this country than anyone else I can think of."

"You wouldn't have heard that speech fifty years ago," Toshi said.

Seeger bought his land in Beacon in 1949. He and Toshi had two small children. (Later, they had another.) They were living in Greenwich Village with Toshi's parents, and they wanted to move to the country. Seeger was thirty, and Toshi was twenty-seven. He was becoming well known as a musician, but they had no money yet to speak of. A real-estate agent showed them properties he regarded as inexpensive. "I remember a big barn at one place and a little stream and some woods," Seeger told me. “Five thousand dollars. I said no, I couldn’t afford it.” The agent showed them an old barn with some land for three thousand dollars. “I said I couldn’t afford that, either.” The agent asked, “What *can* you afford?” Seeger said, “How about just some land.” He showed them a patch of woods on the side of a mountain set back from the river. It had been part of a woodlot attached to one of the brickyards that used to operate along the riverbank. “Hand-made bricks,” Seeger said. “All the yards had mountain land above them. They’d have wood carried to the river on a sledge and turned into charcoal and bricks. This parcel had been logged clean in 1911, but it had a cliff, and no one wanted to climb it. People thought it was too steep to build on, but I climbed up here and saw that it levelled off at the top for a bit, and there was room to put a house.”

*Seeger as an Army private singing at the opening of the Washington labor canteen, with Eleanor Roosevelt (center), in 1944.*

JOSEPH A. HORNE/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Seeger brought Toshi to the top of the cliff and said, “See what a nice view we’ll have.” Toshi is small and dark-haired. Her gaze is direct and measuring, and she is more pragmatic than Seeger. She looked around at the brush and the trees that enclosed them and said, “View of what?” They paid seventeen hundred and fifty dollars for seventeen and a half acres. That summer, they moved to the property with their children, who were one and three, and lived in a trailer while Seeger chopped down trees. A stream ran through a ravine below their campsite. Toshi would carry her younger child on her hip and have the older one grab her skirt, and they would go down to the stream like pioneers and collect water for cooking and washing. Seeger was often gone on the weekends, working. At the end of August, he was to sing near Peekskill, fifteen miles away, on a stage in a field, at a concert to benefit the Harlem chapter of the Civil Rights Congress. The star of the concert was Paul Robeson, whose father had been a slave. Robeson had a law degree from Columbia, but he made his living as an actor and singer. He had played Othello in London and on Broadway, and he had appeared in the London stage version of “Show Boat” and, later, in the movie. In 1934, he went to Russia and became persuaded that Russian society was more just than America’s. The Peekskill paper wrote that he was “violently and loudly pro-Russian.” The Ku Klux Klan had a chapter in the area. Before the concert, vigilantes tore down the stage. The organizers built another stage on another lot, and the concert was rescheduled, for September 4th. Dunaway writes that, during the interval, the Ku Klux Klan sent a letter to an organization that Seeger had been part of, People’s Artists, thanking it and Seeger for the seven hundred and twenty-two applications for membership it had received since the stage was destroyed.

Seeger and Toshi and their children, Toshi’s father, and two friends of the

Seegers drove to Peekskill for the concert. They passed men and women and children who shouted obscenities at them. There were woods on three sides of the field and a road on the fourth. Members of several unions surrounded the site so that no one could get in who wasn't supposed to be there, a means, they hoped, of keeping out the vigilantes. At the concert, a woman named Sylvia Kahn sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." "A pianist played Prokofiev, I think," Seeger said. "I played two or three songs, a country blues I learned from Woody called 'T for Texas,' and I sang 'If I Had a Hammer,' for one of the first times. Paul Robeson sang for an hour. He sang 'Ol' Man River,' from 'Show Boat,' which he was famous for. He had a man standing behind him and one on either side, so that he wouldn't be hit by a sniper firing from the woods. I suppose they could have got him from the road in front, but you couldn't have someone stand in front of him while he sang."

The concert ended before nightfall—the organizers wanted everyone to be able to leave before dark. Robeson got into a car, then out the other side of it and into another and possibly into a third one. "Unless you were watching closely, you wouldn't have known what car he was in," Seeger said. Robeson's car was among the first to leave. A lot of people had arrived from Manhattan in chartered buses. Seeger left about an hour after the concert ended. When he tried to make the turn toward Beacon, a policeman diverted him. On the road were pieces of glass. "Around a corner was a young man throwing stones at each car that passed," Seeger said. "The cars were moving slowly, and he'd run right up beside them and launch the stones from four feet as hard as he could. They were about the size of a baseball. They came from piles of them that were built up beside the road. While we were singing, these people had been collecting stones."

Toshi's father put the children on the floor of the car and lay on top of them. Rocks broke all the windows except the back ones. Seeger saw a policeman farther up the road. "I stopped and shouted, 'Officer, aren't you going to do something?' All he said was 'Move on. Move on.' " When the chartered buses reached Manhattan that evening, riders told a reporter from the *Times* that, even as far away as Yonkers, nearly twenty-five miles, people had thrown stones at them.

Seeger drove to a campground that had showers—there was no running water at his place—and he and Toshi and her father washed the glass from the children's hair. They all had to move carefully in order not to be cut by shards that were hidden in their clothes.

When Seeger had cleared two acres, he went to the New York Public Library, on Forty-second Street, and looked up "log cabin." He planned to build a house from trees he had cut down. The Weavers were beginning to work in night clubs. Seeger would either take an evening train to join them or drive. If he drove, he made his way back early in the morning up the West Side, and when he found a packing crate thrown out on the sidewalk he would knock it apart and take the wood home. Much of it he used to frame the roof. If he didn't drive, he would catch the night train delivering mail up the Hudson. The train stopped at each town. Seeger would sleep on the train and arrive home to have breakfast with his family.

People would visit from the city, and Seeger would hand them a shovel or a saw. He had intended, with their help, to haul logs from the woods to where he had dug the foundation, but the trees were too heavy. Instead, he found a man in Beacon with a draft horse. "His name was Watson Shannon," Seeger said. "I can still see the roof of his house from the lawn. He only died recently. How he got the draft horse here, I don't know. I guess he walked it. Anyway, he showed up in the morning, and he had a long chain. He walked up the hill from the house with the horse, and he'd wrap the chain around the log and slap the horse, and then he went running down after it, wrapping the reins around stones and tree trunks. He said once you got the horse started you didn't want it to stop."

Recently, Seeger took me through the cabin, which no one lives in anymore—he and Toshi live in a larger house built later, on the other side of a small clearing. Past the front door was a big room with tree-trunk beams, a stone fireplace, a kitchen, and a picture window. Through the window was the river, about a mile away. "That was our first extravagance," Seeger said of the window. "A hundred dollars." He stepped across the room and stood beside it. "I put up some shelves to hold records and books right here," he went on. "The baby's crib was under it. One night, we heard a terrible crash, and the shelf and all the books and records had come down on her crib. Fortunately, it was a strong oak crib." He shook his head. "That's the kind of stupid thing I've done all my life," he said plaintively. "I have taken greater risks than I should have in raising my children. I remember walking along the edge of a cliff with my son and not watching him closely. Because I could watch myself, I took it for granted that he could." He shrugged. "Anyway, my daughter's fifty-seven now."

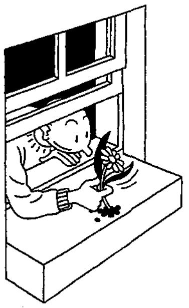
He said that the bulk of the wood in the house was oak, but that he had also used maple and hickory. He hadn't expected ever to have enough money for electricity, so he made no allowance for the wires to enter the foundation. Three years later, to install them, he had to dig underneath it. Off the kitchen was a second room, where there was a bed and a rocking chair, some books, and another stone fireplace. "The first stonework was terrible," Seeger said, thrusting his chin toward the fireplace. "It didn't have any form or design. I made lots of mistakes. After that, I went around sketching all the old farmhouses in Westchester for their stonework, and I learned that the old masons would set their best stones at the corners and run a line between them, then build up the courses."

Several inches above the fireplace and toward one side were two stones that were smaller than the stones around them. One was about the size of a grapefruit, and the other had paving tar around it and gravel embedded like shrapnel in the tar. "They came into the car during the riot and didn't go out," Seeger said. "I thought that if I put them there I would never forget what had happened."

We closed the door on the cabin and walked over to the main house. Toshi was leaving to run errands in town. Everything we needed to make soup and salad for lunch was in the refrigerator, she said. She told Seeger that she was putting a pear tart in the toaster oven for dessert. "This is practice for Pete," she told me. "I want to be sure, in case I go join my ancestors, that he can take care of himself. I don't want to have to lower baskets of food from the heavens." Before she left, she took the phone off the hook. "It's been ringing all morning," she said.

We sat down to eat at a table by a window, with the river at our backs. Seeger began talking about his father, Charles, who was also a musician. "My father was a big influence on me," he said. Somewhat mournfully, he added, "He was overenthusiastic all his life. First about this, then about that." Seeger's older brother John told Dunaway, "The biggest danger for Peter was whether he'd be swallowed up in father's dreams."

As a teen-ager, Charles became an accomplished pianist. He liked to go to symphony concerts, and he could look at complicated scores and know what the music should sound like. "He thought the great symphonies would save the human race," Seeger said. "He thought they had something to teach us that couldn't be expressed in words." He went to Harvard, then he spent a year in Germany, and for a while he was a conductor in Cologne. While he was there, he realized that he could no longer hear the flutes and the piccolos, and that he was going deaf. He decided that he would become a composer instead. He returned to New York, where he met Seeger's mother, Constance de Clyver Edson, a violinist. Her grandfather was the headmaster of a fancy school in New York, and she had been brought up partly in Paris and Tunisia. The two of them performed together at society parties, "a soirée here, a soirée there," Seeger said.



They were married in 1911. Charles was hired to establish the music department at the University of California at Berkeley. A friend took him to the lettuce fields east of San Francisco where, Seeger said, "he saw children the same age as his own being worked to the bone," and he was never the same. When the First World War broke out, he made speeches denouncing it as an imperialist war. His wife asked him not to, but he persisted. Eventually, the university gave him an extended sabbatical, with the understanding that he wouldn't return.

"He bought a Ford Tin Lizzie," Seeger said, "a Model T, and he drove his family east. It was slow going, and on the way he got this grand scheme. He said to my mother, 'Rather than save our music for the rich people in the city, why not take it out and play it for people in the small towns?' He was going to be a one-family Chautauqua, bringing music to the workers."

Beginning in the winter of 1918, on his parents' new property in Patterson, New York, about sixty miles northeast of Manhattan, Charles carefully built a trailer to haul behind his car. It took a year and a half. Seeger turned in his chair and showed me on the wall, among a collection of family pictures, a small, shiny black-and-white photograph. Charles and his wife and the children—Seeger has two brothers—are standing on a sidewalk beside the black Model T. Behind the car is a portion of what looks a little like a covered wagon. The trailer's tires were made of solid rubber. Underneath it was a platform that could slide out to become a stage. His mother played the violin, and his father played a small organ, the kind that chaplains used in the First World War. The family slept in beds in the trailer. They left New York and drove slowly south, intending to reach Florida eventually. In Richmond, Virginia, Dunaway writes, the pavement was so hot that their tires sank into it. "The trip was a disaster," Seeger says. At night, his mother did the family's laundry in a pot of water over a fire. The night she pulled Peter, a year and a half old, from the embers was the night, he told me, she called it off.

The Seegers returned to Charles's parents' house in Patterson. For the summer, they lived in the barn. The kids would throw tennis balls against the wall and call it barn squash. At four, Seeger was sent to boarding school, he said, but he came home a year and a half later. His father had been appalled to learn that his son had had scarlet fever, and no one had told him. Charles and Constance had in the meantime moved to Nyack, on the west bank of the Hudson. Constance wanted Seeger trained as a classical musician, but Seeger didn't care to be. When she insisted that he learn to read music, he said that he just wanted to have fun. She worried that he would grow up to be a musical illiterate. She left instruments around the house for him to find, and, by the time he was five or six, he could play songs on the organ, the marimba, the piano, and the squeezebox. "Years later, I asked my father, 'When do you think people should learn to read music?' " Seeger said. "And he told me, 'When they know what kind of music they want to play.' He said, 'You don't learn to read before you speak, and you don't learn to dance before you walk.' "

The librarian in Nyack gave Seeger novels by Ernest Thompson Seton, who helped start the Boy Scouts. "Camping and woodcraft," Seeger said. "The first one I really liked was called 'Rolf in the Woods.' Rolf was fifteen years old in 1810. He was being beaten by his uncle, and his mother dies. He runs away and finds in the woods a wigwam with an old Indian living in it, trapping animals and exchanging their skins at the hardware store for tools and nails. The boy asks if he can stay with him, and the Indian points to a corner, and the boy falls asleep. The uncle comes along later and says, 'I see you're with the Indian, I'll go get my gun,' so Rolf and the Indian run off together, and they end up in the Adirondacks. Anyway, you can see how it goes."

Seeger's brother John joined the Boy Scouts, "but I thought it was for the birds," Seeger says, "saluting the flag." He bought a length of muslin and took it to a neighbor and had her sew it into a shape he could use to make a teepee. Among the photographs on the wall is one of him as a scrawny little boy, without a shirt, and holding a bow and arrow. "That's me pretending to be an Indian," he said.

When Seeger was eight, in 1927, his parents separated. His father eventually married a modernist composer named Ruth Crawford. They moved to Maryland, and began working in Washington. In 1932, Seeger was enrolled, on a scholarship, at Avon Old Farms, a boys' school in Connecticut. Briefly, to make money, he shined the other boys' shoes. He acted in the school plays: "Saint Joan," by George Bernard Shaw, and "Hamlet." "At thirteen, I played the female parts, with my hair curled and falsies," he said. He also worked on the woods crew. "There was a nice French Canadian in charge of teaching us how to sharpen the axe with a file, and how to chop without hurting ourselves. He'd go through a piece of forest and blaze trees that had to come down—a weeding process—and we'd cut them." Seeger also had his own newspaper, which he mimeographed and handed out. The playwright and poet Edna St. Vincent Millay visited the school to see a production of one of her plays. "They told me that, with my newspaper, I should interview her," Seeger said. "I had never interviewed anyone famous. I didn't know what to ask. Finally I blurted out, 'What do you think of Shakespeare?' I don't remember anything else of the interview."

After three years at Avon Old Farms, Seeger went to Harvard on a scholarship. "I roomed right above the Harvard Union, which was a big dining hall, and I made a little bit of money as a waiter," he said. "Then I went to a place where I could get free meals if I washed pots." Visiting his father in the summers, he had heard rural American music and become captivated by the banjo.

*"This is who I am. This is how I earn it."*

• •

As a sophomore, he failed one of his winter exams and lost his scholarship. "I wasn't sorry to leave Harvard," he said. "I was disgusted by what I considered the cynicism displayed by one of my professors. He would say, 'Every society has a spring, a winter, a summer, and a fall,' and scoff at us trying to stop Hitler. He said, 'All you can do is accommodate.' I was young and idealistic." Crossing the campus shortly before he departed, he passed one of his classmates, John F. Kennedy. "He was walking with someone who was carrying papers for him, I think, and saying something about being very annoyed at not having been able to reach someone on the phone."

His father, he said, was part of a group of musicians and composers, including Aaron Copland, called the Composers' Collective. The Composers' Collective concerned itself with writing music for strikes and unemployment lines, and for the new world order. "The closest they all got to writing real songs was when they wrote rounds," Seeger said. "My father wanted to publish a book called 'Rounds About the Very Rich.' He was fond of one that was sung in three parts, like 'Row, Row Your Boat.' It went like this." Seeger put down his fork and, with his chin raised, began to sing, "Oh, joy upon this earth/ to live and see the day/when Rockefeller senior/shall up to me and say/'Comrade, can you spare a dime?'"

Charles liked Appalachian music—Seeger said that he may have inspired Copland to write "Appalachian Spring." In any case, he introduced his son to a woman from Kentucky who called herself Aunt Molly Jackson. "She sang, 'I am a union woman/ just as brave as I can be/I do not like the bosses/and the bosses don't like me,'" Seeger said. "And that was how I began to hear folk music."

Seeger's father believed that music's most important purpose was social. For a while, he worked in Washington for the W.P.A. music project. He wrote out what he called his ten purposes of music. Seeger went upstairs to a loft where he

*"I'm going to need to speak to someone from either personnel or maintenance."*

keeps his office to look for a copy. I heard him going through papers. "What did I do with that file?" he said. "What did I do? This is ridiculous. Absolutely ridiculous. Aah, here it is." He came downstairs and handed it to me. The first principle was "Music, as any art, is not an end in itself but is a means for achieving larger ends." Another was "Music as a group activity is more important than music as an individual accomplishment." He also wrote that the necessary question to ask was not " 'Is it good music?' but 'What is the music good for?'; and if it bids fair to aid in the welding of the people into more independent, capable and democratic action, it must be approved."

While I was reading, Seeger abruptly stood up and said, "I forgot the pear tart." He brought the tart to the table, then he went to the freezer and came back with a column of ice-cream containers—the Seegers had recently had a birthday party. While we ate the tart and the ice cream, we got to talking about the beautiful stone walls in the countryside around Beacon.

"In my mind's eye, there's two teenagers, and the father's saying, 'Boys, you get ten feet of wall built, or you don't get any supper,' " Seeger said. "And one of them says to the other, 'Next year I'll be fourteen, and I'm going to get a job at the factory—they pay you two dollars a week. He don't see that much money in a month.' The father says, 'What will I do without you? The farm will go back to forest.' "

He finished his tart and put his hands in his lap, like a penitent. "The opening of the American West meant the reforestation of the East," he said. "That's important." Then he began collecting the dishes.

Seeger's politics are of the most extravagantly conservative kind. He believes ardently in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. His interpretation of them is literal. In all his years of activism, through the movements for workers' rights and civil rights, the movement against the Vietnam War, and the ecological movement, in all of which he figured prominently, there is no conceit that he has more emphatically embraced than that all human beings are created equal. In the early and middle part of the twentieth century, such a conviction made a person not a patriot but a socialist. When Seeger moved to the country, he held a couple of meetings with a middle-aged couple, the only other Communists around, then quit the Party. "I thought it was pointless," he said. "I realized I could sing the same songs I sang whether I belonged to the Communist Party or not, and I never liked the idea anyway of belonging to a secret organization."

After lunch, we went out and looked at the river, and I could see where Seeger had been standing, in 1955, when a car arrived, and the man driving it asked if he was Pete Seeger. Then he handed Seeger an envelope and left. Seeger opened the envelope and called out to Toshi, "They've finally got around to me." He had been summoned to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He might have cited the Fifth Amendment, as many people did, but he didn't, because doing so suggested that he had something to hide. He decided to rely instead on the protection of the First Amendment.

"Mr. Seeger, prior to your entry in the service in 1942," he was asked, "were you engaged in the practice of your profession in the area of New York?"

"It is hard to call it a profession," Seeger said. "I kind of drifted into it and I never intended to be a musician, and I am glad I am one now, and it is a very honorable profession, but when I started out actually I wanted to be a newspaperman, and when I left school—"

"Will you answer the question, please?"

"I have to explain that it really wasn't my profession," Seeger said. "I picked up a little change in it."

"Did you practice your profession?"

"I sang for people, yes, before World War II, and I also did as early as 1925."

"And upon your return from the service in December of 1945, you continued in your profession?"

"I continued singing," Seeger said, "and I expect I always will."

Then he was asked whether he had appeared at an event that had been announced in the *Daily Worker*.

"I am not going to answer any questions as to my association, my philosophical or religious beliefs or my political beliefs, or how I voted in any election, or any of these private affairs," he said. "I think these are very improper questions for any American to be asked, especially under such compulsion as this. I would be very glad to tell you my life if you want to hear of it."

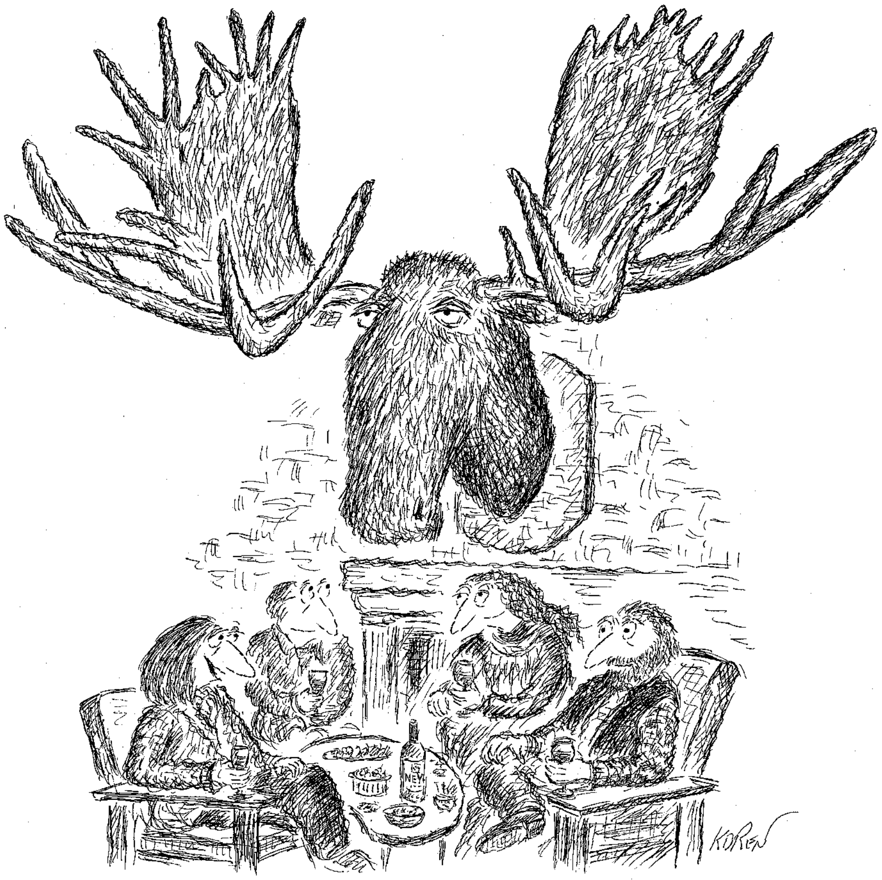
They didn't. What the committee members wanted was to have him say that he had been a Communist and to give them names of others who had been, and he wouldn't. Again and again, he said, "My answer is the same as before." Eventually, they gave up.

He left the hearing knowing that he was certain to be indicted for contempt of Congress, and, on March 26, 1957, he was, by a federal grand jury, on ten counts. The indictment meant that he couldn't leave the Southern District of New York without permission. Every time he went somewhere to work, he had to send a telegram saying where he was going and how he was getting there. At one night club, the announcer introduced him by saying, "Here's Pete Seeger, out on bail." In hotel rooms, he had to check the closets to be sure that he wasn't about to be set up. According to Dunaway, a group called Texans for America persuaded textbook publishers to remove any mention of him. A woman who had him sing at a barbecue in her back yard received a summons from HUAC. He was to play two nights in Nyack. The American Legion discovered, in time to prevent the second night's performance, that the theatre had an expired license. To renew it, the owner of the theatre had to pay a fee. The town offices closed before he could, and the mayor and the clerk left town.

Seeger's trial was not held until March of 1961. The jury took an hour and twenty minutes to decide that he was guilty. He was sentenced to a year in jail. In May of 1962, an appeals court ruled that the indictment was flawed and overturned the conviction. As we stood in the yard, he quoted a line from the decision: " 'We are not inclined to dismiss lightly claims of Constitutional stature because they are asserted by one who may appear unworthy of sympathy.' " He said again, " 'Unworthy of sympathy,' " and shook his head.

Before Seeger's confrontation with HUAC, people sometimes regarded his optimism as childish, and unrealistic, as a habit of mind inconsistent with the moral rigor of a serious person. Afterward, he became a figure of undeniable stature. He had stared down jail time. He had stood amid peril for his beliefs. He had typified the principles of all the brave people he had sung about.

Here is a story told to me lately by a man named John Cronin, who is the director of the Pace Academy for the Environment, at Pace University. Cronin has known Seeger for thirty years. "About two winters ago, on Route 9 outside Beacon, one winter day, it was freezing—rainy and slushy, a miserable winter day—the war in Iraq is just heating up and the country's in a poor mood," Cronin said. "I'm driving north, and on the other side of the road I see from the back a tall, slim figure in a hood and coat. I'm looking, and I can tell it's Pete. He's standing there all by himself, and he's holding up a big piece of cardboard that clearly has something written on it. Cars and trucks are going by him. He's getting wet. He's holding the homemade sign above his head—he's very tall, and his chin is raised the way he does when he sings—and he's turning the sign in a semicircle, so that the drivers can see it as they pass, and some people are honking and waving at him, and some people are giving him the finger. He's eighty-four years old. I know he's got some purpose, of course, but I don't know what it is. What struck me is that, whatever his intentions are, and obviously he wants people to notice what he's doing, he wants to make an impression—anyway, whatever they are, he doesn't call the newspapers and say, 'I'm Pete Seeger, here's what I'm going to do.' He doesn't cultivate publicity. That isn't what he does. He's far more modest than that. He would never make a fuss. He's just standing out there in the cold and the sleet like a scarecrow. I go a little bit down the road, so that I can turn and come back, and when I get him in view again, this solitary and elderly figure, I see that what he's written on the sign is 'Peace.' " ♦



*"And where did you put the rest of the moose?"*

ANNALS OF RELIGION

# A CHURCH ASUNDER

*For Episcopalians, faith in the power of compromise was almost doctrinal—until a diocese elected a gay bishop.*

### BY PETER J. BOYER

In the late summer of 1965, a high-school valedictorian named Gene Robinson anxiously set off from Lexington, Kentucky, for college. He was the first in his family to come so far, and the school he'd chosen, the University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee, was not an obvious fit. Sewanee, as the school is known, was conceived, by an Episcopal bishop turned Confederate general, as an élite institution of learning for the sons of the landed class. A century later, when Gene Robinson arrived on campus, Sewanee remained an insular place, a mountaintop sanctuary known for its academic rigor, its cultivated airs, and a full measure of that particular Southern regard for tradition. A Sewanee man, dressed always in jacket and tie, was a gentleman of breeding, who had likely attended a preparatory school. Gene Robinson had grown up on a dirt farm, the son of tobacco sharecroppers, and had gone to Sewanee on a scholarship after graduating from public school.

Sewanee was owned and operated by the Southern dioceses of the Episcopal Church, and the school, which included a seminary, had a distinctly Anglican character. Every student was required to attend services at the university's All Saints' Chapel, as well as morning worship on most Sundays. Robinson, who had grown up in a conservative congregation of the Disciples of Christ, found himself immersed in the Episcopal practice of faith. It was a form of worship that, to an outsider, could seem so wholly foreign as to be impenetrable, with its candles and censers, the processions of robed priests and acolytes, and the recitations of ancient rites that the initiated followed in a Book of Common Prayer. The country church where Robinson's family had worshipped for generations didn't believe in creedal formulas of faith; the Holy Scriptures alone were enough. But Episcopalians ritually enunciated their beliefs at every service, through the utterance of one creed or another.

For Robinson, this saying of creeds intensified a spiritual crisis that had been gathering since high school. He had accepted Jesus Christ in his early teens, submitting, as was the custom in his church, to a full submerging in the baptismal pool following a public profession of faith. By high school, though, he had begun to harbor doubts about some of the particulars of the Christian faith—doubts, he felt, that would not be a welcome subject of inquiry either in his church or in his deeply religious home. At Sewanee, he found himself regularly obliged to proclaim some of the very assertions he questioned. The Nicene Creed, that fourth-century statement of Christian orthodoxy, particularly vexed him:

> I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:
>
> And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.
>
> And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

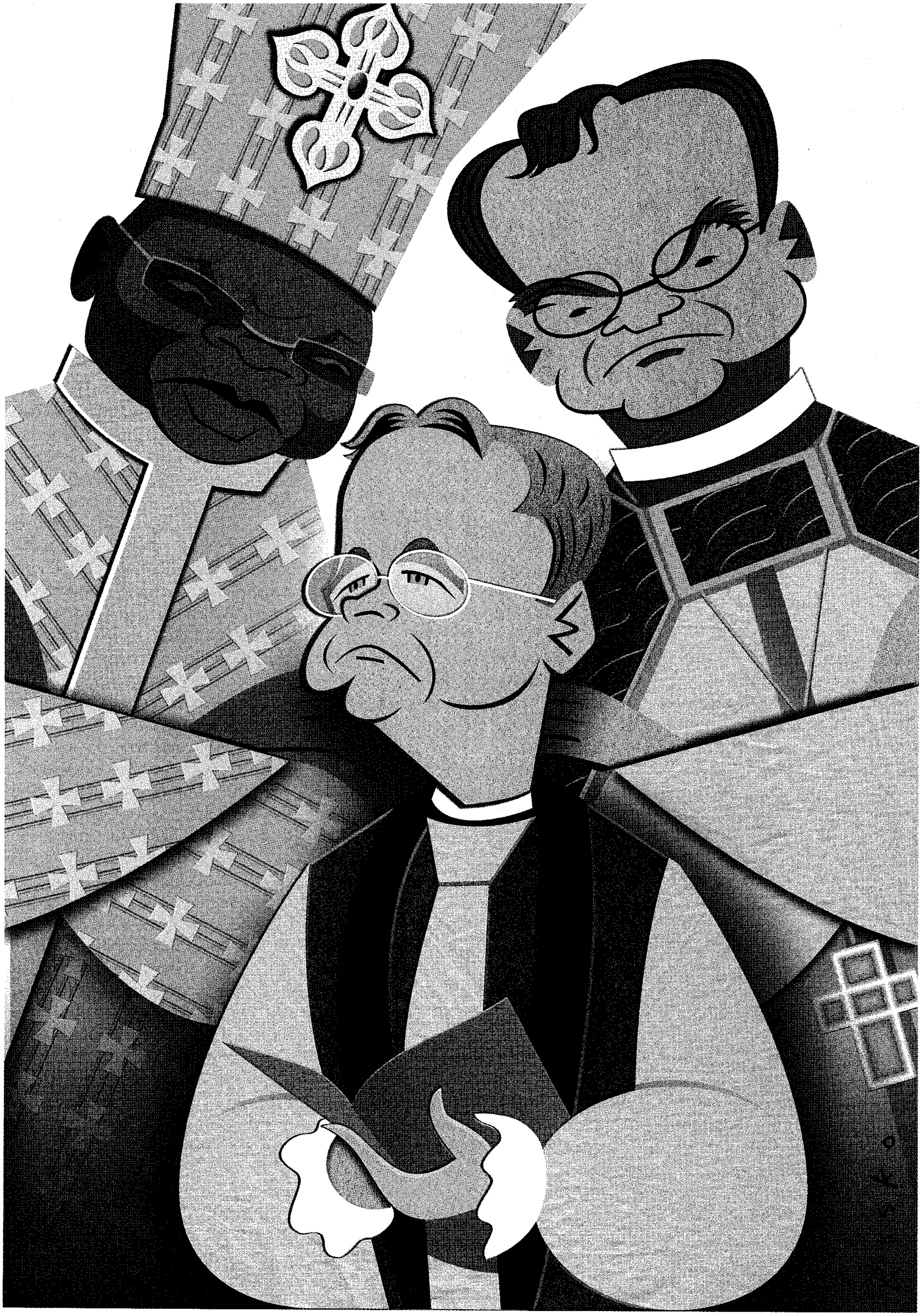
To be expected to repeat these sentiments, Robinson decided, was an offense against conscience. He took his protest to one of the school's chaplains, who listened to him and told him that he saw no problem at all. If joining in the Creed distressed him, why not just speak only those portions of it that didn't offend? The chaplain's counsel disarmed Robinson, but it also revealed to him that although the Anglican faith had cherished creeds, it had no absolute doctrine, a paradox rooted in its beginnings as the Church of England.

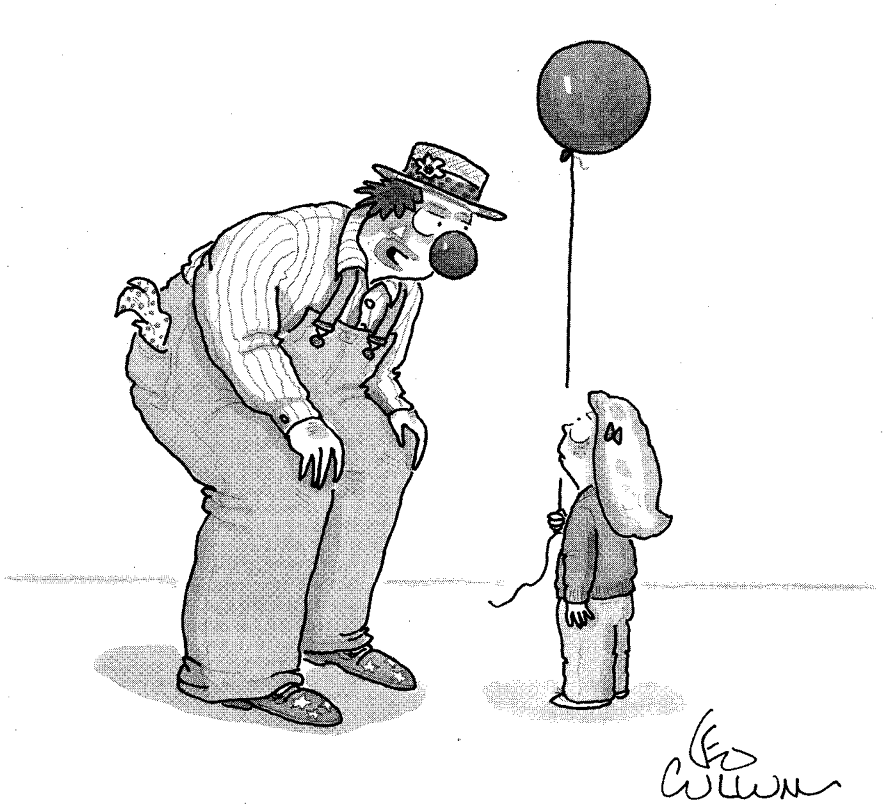
Anglicanism's founding event was a sixteenth-century political fix, engineered by Elizabeth I as a means of avoiding the Reformation-era wars tearing at Europe. Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, for reasons of dynastic and connubial ambition, had broken with the Medici Pope Clement VII and declared himself the "Supreme Head in Earth of the Church of England." Elizabeth's half sister and predecessor, Bloody Mary, imposed a Roman Catholic restoration upon the kingdom, in the process dispatching some three hundred Protestants to the stake. When Elizabeth ascended to the throne as a Protestant, the realm faced a third religious about-face in a dozen years, and the prospect of civil war was real. Elizabeth's elegant solution allowed her subjects to believe whatever they wished but insisted upon a uniform worship service.

The vehicle for this "middle way," as Anglicanism came to be known, was the Book of Common Prayer, which gracefully blended Roman Catholic liturgy with Protestant principles. The prayer book allowed for the coexistence within one institution of distinctly different interpretations of Christianity, with the unofficial designations of High Church (those parishes inclined toward a more Roman Catholic orientation), Low Church (evangelicals), and Broad Church (those Anglicans tolerant of wide doctrinal interpretations). The Anglican way proved remarkably resilient, absorbing the

ROBERT RISKO

*Schism, anyone? Battling Bishops: Peter Akinola, of Nigeria; Gene Robinson, of New Hampshire; and Bob Duncan, of Pittsburgh.*





*"But, remember, you're responsible for your own happiness."*

shocks of the English civil war and the Enlightenment, and ultimately planting itself worldwide in the footsteps of the British Empire. In the United States, the Church of England became the Episcopal Church.

The big-tent tradition of Anglicanism—what its churchmen call "comprehensiveness"—made the faith especially hospitable to the theological innovations that moved through the Western Christian churches with particular force in the last half of the twentieth century. This new thinking tended to deëmphasize sin and salvation, favoring a progressive theology of social justice and the affirmation of the individual self. That an Episcopal university chaplain in the mid-nineteen-sixties would advise a conflicted student to disregard those parts of the liturgy that made him uncomfortable reflected not only the times but, in a way, the very nature of the Church.

For Robinson, as the weeks and months passed and the Anglican tradition washed over him, it all began to seem less alien, and even strangely captivating. The lyrical Tudor cadences of the liturgy, the majestic old Anglican hymns, sung by the school's prized choir, filling the high spaces of the splendid chapel, all began to find a purchase, and Robinson came to see Episcopal worship as an irresistibly attractive presentation of the Christian faith.

By his senior year he had decided that he would make his life within the Episcopal Church as a priest. On Easter Sunday of that year, 1969, he was confirmed as an Episcopalian. It was a momentous day for Robinson, and for the Episcopal Church. Thirty-four years after leaving Sewanee, Gene Robinson assumed his duties as the Church's first openly gay bishop. His elevation, cast alternately in terms of apostasy and divine revelation, posed the biggest crisis for Anglicanism since the Reformation, and brought the worldwide church to the edge of schism.

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church affirmed Robinson's election as the Bishop of New Hampshire on the evening of August 5, 2003. Earlier, Robinson had addressed a church committee, offering a theological context for his sixteen-year relationship with his gay partner. Sexuality is a gift from God, he said, a means of experiencing, in physical, human terms, God's own love. "What I can tell you is that in my relationship with my partner I am able to express the deep love that's in my heart, and in his unfailing and unquestioning love of me I experience just a little bit of the kind of never-ending, never-failing love that God has for me. So it's sacramental for me."

To several of the bishops at the gathering, the Church's endorsement of this logic, through Robinson's elevation to the episcopacy, pushed the Anglican notion of comprehensiveness beyond its historically implied limits. What the Church had affirmed, in the view of these traditionalists, was not just a different expression of Christianity but a different religion altogether.

When Robinson's affirmation was announced, twenty bishops, led by Robert Duncan, of Pittsburgh, rose in protest. "I will stand against the actions of this Convention with everything I have and everything I am," Duncan said. "I have not left, and will not leave, the Episcopal Church or my apostolic role as Episcopal Bishop of Pittsburgh. It is this Seventy-fourth General Convention that has left us, betrayed us, undone us. May our merciful Lord Jesus have pity on us, His broken bride." With that, Duncan and the others walked out.

They were incendiary words, and it was an insurrectionary gesture for a group of Episcopalians—not a denomination known for high-blooded passion (Bill Clinton recently kidded his Episcopal predecessor George H. W. Bush for being one of the "frozen chosen"). When the American Colonies became the United States, the Church of England in the new country became the Episcopal Church, and although it was no longer the established faith, it was, from the start, the church of the established order. Eight of the first fourteen Presidents were Episcopalians, as have been half of the Chief Justices. The Church was termed "the Republican Party at prayer," meaning that in style and in fact it was the denomination of the moneyed class. Episcopalians, heirs to a historic church that was born in compromise, typically form a committee when conflict arises, and the issue vanishes into the fogs of "further study." There have been schisms, but none amounting to much, with the splinter groups invariably fading to the margins of Anglicanism.

The traditionalist Episcopal rebellion over the elevation of Gene Robinson would not on its face seem likely to have much effect on the national church; Duncan and the bishops who joined him in protest represent only a small percentage of the episcopacy. Their purpose, however, is not to persuade the Episcopal Church but to replace it.

The conservative strategy turns on an audacious twist on the old concept of religious schism: forcing a divide within the Episcopal Church that would render the main church, rather than the dissidents, the schismatic party. This depends on convincing the worldwide Anglican Communion that the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, or ECUSA, as the national body of the church is called, has already departed from the faith, and that an alternative body of orthodox Episcopalians should be recognized as the true church in America. The old Episcopal Church, it is envisioned, would drift away into irrelevance, a shrinking sect of aging white liberals.

The issue may be decided by global demographics. As Professor Philip Jenkins, of Penn State, noted, in "The Next Christendom," even as Christianity is diminishing in the developed West the faith is experiencing an explosive growth worldwide. The center of gravity of the faith is now squarely in the Global South. If the new Christendom had a world capital based on the location of its believers, it would be somewhere south of the Sahara.

This trend is acutely felt in Anglicanism, one of the world's largest Christian denominations, with seventy-three million members. More than half of all Anglicans live in Africa, South America, and Asia, where the faith continues to grow even as it recedes in Britain and the United States. There are more Anglicans in Kenya (roughly three million) than there are Episcopalians in the U.S. (2.2 million), and Kenya isn't the largest Anglican church in Africa. Church membership in Uganda is nine million, and in Nigeria is nearing twenty million worshippers. While the Church of England remains the mother church, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is the spiritual leader of the world's Anglicans, the balance of power in church politics has shifted dramatically.

That is why the future of the four-hundred-and-fifty-year-old Anglican project may turn upon the reaction of a few key Global South churchmen to the ordination of a gay bishop in the distant Diocese of New Hampshire. The theology of these men is a direct legacy of the Church Mission Society, a nineteenth-century undertaking by the evangelical wing of the Church of England to "promote the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathen." The fervent men who carried the faith to the far corners of the empire left a lasting imprint on their mission territories, and the churches in those countries are today led mostly by men who are themselves assertively evangelical and orthodox. They regard with dismay the progressive turn of the Western church, its willingness to rethink the fundamentals of the faith, and its apparent doubt about the plain meaning of Scripture. "The Bible doesn't make as much sense to them as it used to, to their ancestors," Henry Luke Orombi, the Archbishop of Uganda, says. "The interpretation of the Bible is no longer what it was before. And that's why the church life in America is so anemic and feeble."

Orombi and other leaders of the church in the Global South believe that the current controversy over homosexuality directly reflects the divergence within the church over scriptural authority. The Bible, Old Testament and New, is unambiguous regarding homosexuality—it is a sin to be repented of, and to be condemned by the righteous. In the view of the orthodox, the acceptance of homosexuality in the American and English churches requires a reading of Scripture so innovative as to render its plain language meaningless. Peter Akinola, the Archbishop of Nigeria, has been outspoken on the issue, declaring that the Western church has so assiduously accommodated trends in the secular culture that it has betrayed the faith. "What is written of God is for all time, for all people," he told me this winter. "But when you take what is convenient for you, and you hold on to that, and that which is not convenient for you, you throw it away—then there is a problem."

Akinola is the acknowledged leader of the church in the Global South, and as such he is possibly the most powerful figure in Anglicanism. He is, of course, subject to the prejudices of his own culture, in which homosexuality is taboo. Akinola has been quoted as saying that he cannot fathom the sexual union of two men, and that "even in the world of animals, dogs, cows, lions, we don't hear of such things." There is also a practical aspect informing the views of churchmen like Orombi and Akinola, whose churches are in competition with Islam. In the Islamic areas of Nigeria, for example, homosexuality is punishable by death, and Anglicanism's countenancing of gays complicates their evangelical mission. "Instead of proclaiming the grace of God, you have to justify that which God says should not be done," Akinola says. "Instead of putting your energy into the work of mission, you're spending your time defending the indefensible. It makes things much more difficult."

To the Global South primates, such acts as the consecration of Gene Robinson without the broad assent of the whole church reflect an arrogant indifference to the consequences. "If you want to be very blunt about it," Orombi says, "it's a form of neocolonialism." Bishops from the former British territories were routinely frustrated when they tried to be heard at the church's once-a-decade Lambeth Conference. In 1978, Akinola's predecessor Joseph Adetiloye stood at the microphone for twenty minutes, refusing to be seated until he was recognized by the chair. "In ten years, when African bishops come to the microphone at this conference, we will be so numerous and influential that you will have to recognize us," he said. "In 1998, we will have grown so much that our voice will determine the outcome of the Lambeth Conference." And, indeed, at the 1998 Conference conservatives, with the support of the Africans, pushed through a resolution declaring that homosexual practice is "incompatible with Scripture" and church teaching. The liberal American bishop John Shelby Spong, of Newark, disparaged the Africans' form of Christianity—"They've yet to face the intellectual revolution of Copernicus and Einstein that we've had to face in the developing world"—and the American church continued along the course that led to the consecration of Gene Robinson. But the Africans had laid their marker.

The traditionalist Americans see men like Akinola and Orombi as their natural allies, and, of course, as invaluable leverage. Global South church leaders have been inclined to help the efforts to supplant the Episcopal Church as the official Anglican body in the U.S. They have opened mission churches in the United States, and have offered episcopal oversight to those dissident orthodox churches wishing to leave ECUSA while remaining within the Anglican Communion. They are, for the Americans, the key factor in the effort to pressure the world church into recognizing an alternative American church body or persuading ECUSA to repent.

It is one way, Henry Orombi says, of keeping faith with those long-ago Englishmen in muttonchop whiskers who brought the church to Africa. "A hundred or so years ago, the fire was in the Western world," Orombi says. "And many of their great people went over to the countries in the Southern Hemisphere, and reached out there, and planted seeds there. And then things changed in the Northern Hemisphere. . . . It now looks like the Western world is tired and old. But, praise God, the Southern Hemisphere, which is a product of the missionary outreach, is young and vital and exuberant. So, in a way, I think that what God has done is he took seeds and he planted them in the Southern Hemisphere, and now they're going to come back, right to the Northern Hemisphere. It is happening. It is happening."

Gene Robinson watches these developments with a mixture of sadness and alarm. "The reason that I have trouble with Bob Duncan and that bunch is that they are seeking to align our church with Peter Akinola, who says that homosexuals are lower than the dogs," he recently told me. "That is very close to saying 'inhuman,' which is very reminiscent of what Germans said about Jews and so allowed them to devalue Jews, that it was O.K. to exterminate them. Bob Duncan wants to ally our church with the church of Kenya, where the primate there said that, when I was consecrated, Satan entered the church. What most people don't realize is that homosexuality is something that I am, it's not something that I do. It's at the very core of who I am. We're not talking about taking a liberal or conservative stance on a particular issue; we're talking about who I am."

One winter when Robinson was in high school, he developed a fever and a sore throat so severe that it required several visits to the family doctor. On one of the visits, the teen-ager complained that he'd never felt so poorly in his life. The doctor looked at him and said, "Oh yes you have, and a lot worse than this. Sit down."

*"I'm so glad you decided to participate in our Money for Employment program."*

In the spring of 1947, the doctor said, he was called in to consult on the case of a severely damaged newborn at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Lexington. There had been serious complications in the delivery. The child's young mother was a small woman with an extremely narrow birth canal. After an agonizing night, with the baby in severe distress, the delivery team resorted to forceps. The child, a boy, was at last forcibly extracted—alive, but very badly mangled.

The baby's parents, who were poor farmers, had little notion of what was happening, and they weren't the sort to ask many questions. The baby had been placed in an incubator in an intensive-care unit, and for hours that was the only information they had. A nurse suggested the name of a pediatric specialist, who was called in for consultation. He examined the child and then told the young parents that the baby might not live, and if he did he might be severely handicapped. He was partially paralyzed, and there was no way yet of knowing whether he had suffered lasting brain damage or how severe it might be. The doctor did not mention that he had taken the child's misshapen head in his hands, trying to massage it into something like a normal shape before the mother saw him.

Meanwhile, hospital officials said that a birth certificate must be filed: had a name been chosen for the baby? The young parents—his name was Charles Victor, and hers was Imogene—settled on the name Vicky Gene, suited for a girl. Under the circumstances—the child wasn't expected to live—they decided that the name didn't matter. So their boy grew up not knowing how or why he'd been given such a name until, in high school, a bad case of strep throat led him to the answer. It came just as the larger mystery of Vicky Gene's life was presenting itself.

Imogene Robinson always regarded Vicky Gene as her miracle, and she came to believe that God had saved her boy for everything that was to come. For all the grim warnings she'd been given at the hospital, her baby's paralysis soon resolved itself, and as time passed the child seemed in every discernible way to be quite normal.

Victor and Imogene had been high-school sweethearts in wartime Nicholasville, Kentucky, south of Lexington, and Victor had enlisted right after his eighteenth birthday. They were married soon after Victor's return, and they did what his people had always done, trying to coax a living from the soil of Jessamine County. Victor sharecropped tobacco, a reliable cash crop, and in that first harvest season after Vicky Gene was born Imogene set the baby on the floor of the stripping room and helped pull the tobacco leaves from the stalks. They lived in a house without running water until 1955, after Victor took a second job as a fireman, and they moved up the road into the outskirts of Lexington. Even then, they made the short trip home to Nicholasville a couple of times a week to attend services at the Disciples of Christ Church, which Victor's ancestors had helped to found.

It was not a home overly given to the airing of introspections, and certainly not those of the sort with which Gene struggled. "From the seventh grade on," Robinson recalls now, "I was horrified at the possibility that I was attracted to men and not women. Some of my friends got ahold of a *Playboy* magazine and were showing it to a group of us, and I could tell that these pictures did something different for them than they did for me." He desperately tried to banish his feelings. "When I was growing up in Kentucky, we didn't have the word 'gay,' " he says. "When we imagined what homosexual people were like, you know, the good ones were dead, because they had committed suicide. They'd realized how despicable they were, and did something about it. And the ones that weren't courageous enough to do that, we figured they wound up as dope addicts and alcoholics. So, before I could ever talk to anyone else about what I feared might be true, I had to come to grips with that myself."

Through his teen years, he had some same-sex experiences, but he told himself that it was just adolescent experimentation. At Lafayette High School, he played first clarinet in the band, and acted in some plays. He was the top graduate of all of Lexington's high schools in the class of 1965. His academic prowess got him to Sewanee, but he wasn't there long before he realized that being in an all-male college only heightened his conflict. "In order to deal with my feelings, I so totally shut down that—it's sad to me now—I can hardly remember college," he says. "It was like a lost four years, because you can't just sort of selectively repress, you know? I just virtually shut down."

*"Who's the suit?"*

When he was away at college, a letter addressed to Vicky Gene arrived at his parents' home. They opened it, and discovered that their son had applied for conscientious-objector status. Victor Robinson travelled the three hundred miles to Sewanee, the only time he made that trip alone, and pleaded with his son to change his mind, to no avail. "It kind of hurt, because my husband had been in the service," Imogene recalls today. "But, you know, he's still our son, so we didn't let that bother us too awfully much." There was a gathering antiwar movement at Sewanee—the school's R.O.T.C. building was burned during Robinson's senior year—and the seminary offered the ancillary benefit of draft exemption. Robinson was accepted at the General Theological Seminary, in New York City.

He entered the seminary in the fall of 1969. The school is on Ninth Avenue in Chelsea, just a mile from the Stonewall Inn, in Sheridan Square, where earlier that summer the gay-rights movement came to life following days of confrontation with police. It was while Robinson was at the seminary in New York that he acknowledged that he was a homosexual. And it was there, too, that he met Bob Duncan.

"We were taught by the same people—isn't that astounding?" Robinson says now. "It's either bad scholarship on our part or bad teaching, I don't know which."

Like Gene Robinson's, Robert Duncan's bond with the church was made in crisis, but his was never a crisis of faith. He was a cradle Episcopalian, and grew up in Bordentown, New Jersey, in a household that was subject to the random terrors of an emotionally unbalanced mother. She sometimes beat her son, and he regarded his local church as a refuge. Christ Episcopal was in the High Church tradition, a full-bore "bells and smells" Anglo-Catholic experience, with Sanctus bells and incense, and the unchanging comfort of ritual solemnity. "It was wonderful," Duncan recalls now. "I came from a really troubled family, and it was a place of security and predictability. You came into this place, and these people obviously believed in something; there was something a lot bigger here. And you sort of saw into Heaven on

Sunday, and it was pretty wild—I mean, this was not like home."

Duncan, too, was his high school's valedictorian, but his spiritual rebellion, while he was at Trinity College, in Connecticut, was against the unorthodoxy that he encountered there. He recalls a discussion in his freshman religion class about the miracles reported in the New Testament, focussing on those accounts in Mark about Jesus' casting out of demons. "Of course," the professor said, "a lot of people just can't take these stories at their face value." Duncan later counted that moment as his evangelical awakening, when he decided that the claims of Christianity, as expressed in the Scriptures and in church teaching, are either absolutely true or the whole enterprise of the church is meaningless. "I remember sitting there in that class and saying, 'Well, you know what? Jesus is the best friend I ever met. He was with me through all these teen-age years, and all this trouble at home, and I've come to rely on him. And the fact for me is, I'm actually going to believe his word until it's proved false.' "

The consecration of Gene Robinson pains Duncan because of its implicit denial of the core elements of the Christian faith: sin and redemption. "If sin isn't sin, you don't need a Saviour," he says. Like many conservative Episcopalians, Duncan says that his battle is not with Gene Robinson, or even over the issue of homosexuality, but with what he considers a radical reinterpretation of the faith by the liberal church. "I'm not in a fight over sexuality, gracious sakes," he says. In his earlier career in campus ministries, he often ministered to young gay and lesbian people. "I loved them and cared for them," he says. "We brought them in and helped them understand that God loved them. And actually not all of them came out of their same-sex affection, but they grew a lot toward God. We just made it clear we can't bless the relationships. Everybody's a sinner; you've got to break yourself."

As it happened, Gene Robinson tried mightily to do just that. Robinson once believed as firmly as anyone that homosexuality was both a psychological disorder and a sin. "I think one of the things that people who are not gay sometimes fail to remember is that we learned all the same things that they did," he says. "The hardest coming out is to oneself." While in the seminary, he entered psychotherapy. "I got into therapy, to change this awful thing about myself," he says. "It's admitting to having this terrible sickness, and you want to get over it."

A year later, Robinson was convinced that he was ready to undertake a heterosexual relationship. While interning as a chaplain at the University of Vermont, he met a young woman named Isabella Martin, whom everyone called Boo. Robinson warned her that he had been attracted to men, and that he'd undergone therapy to change that. "I thought I was capable of having a relationship with a woman," he recalls. "We were totally open about that."

They married in 1972, near Boo's home in New Hampshire. After seminary, Gene got a job as parish curate in New Jersey, and Boo finished her undergraduate degree. Eventually, they moved to New Hampshire, acquired a piece of Boo's family farm, and Gene ran various youth programs and spiritual retreats. They had two daughters, Jamee and Ella, but finally the fragile accord between them began to come apart. "Being in that relationship came at extraordinary personal cost, to me and to her," he says. "In the last three or four years of our marriage, we together dealt with the fact that the price was too great for both of us." In 1986, Robinson and Boo agreed to divorce.

It was an amicable parting. After the divorce was finalized, the couple went to

## AT LEAST THEY WEREN'T SPEAKING FRENCH

### I

At least they weren't speaking French
when my father sat with his brothers and sisters, two of each, on a ramshackle bench
at the end of a lane marked by two white stones
and made mouth music as they waited chilled to the bone

*fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

for the bus meant to bring their parents back from town.
It came and went. Nothing. One sister was weighed down
by the youngest child. A grocery bag from a town more distant still, in troth.
What started as a cough

*fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

would briefly push him forward to some minor renown,
then shove him back, oddly summery, down
along the trench
to that far-flung realm where, at least, they weren't speaking French.

### II

At least they weren't speaking French
when another brother, twenty-something, stepped on a nail no one had bothered to clench
in a plank thrown
halfheartedly from the known to the unknown

*fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

across a drainage ditch on a building site. His nut-brown arm. His leg nut-brown.
That nail sheathed in a fine down

would take no more than a week or ten days to burgeon from the froth
of that piddling little runoff

*fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

and make of him a green and burning tree. His septicemia-crown.
Sowens as much as he could manage. Trying to keep that
    flummery down
as much as any of them could manage. However they might
    describe the stench,
as exhalation, as odor, at least they weren't speaking French.

### III

At least they weren't speaking French
when those twenty-something council workers, one with a winch,
    the other a wrench,
would point my son and me to the long overgrown
lane marked by two faded stones

*fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

like two white-faced clowns
gaping at the generations who passed between them and set down
bag after grocery bag. Setting them on the table. The newspaper
    tablecloth.
1976. Not the East Tyrone Brigade, not Baader-Meinhof

*fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

bringing the suggestion of a frown
to those two mummer-stones still trying to lie low, trying to keep
    their mummery down
to a bare minimum, two stones that, were they to speak, might blench
as much at their own giving out as our taking in that at least they
    weren't speaking French.

—*Paul Muldoon*

a church and underwent a sort of reverse marriage ceremony—returning their wedding rings, vowing mutual support for each other and their children, and celebrating the Eucharist. It was more difficult to break the news to Robinson's parents. "Let's just say that, as a thirty-nine-year-old, to tell them that, A, I was getting divorced, and, B, it was because I was gay—that same father nearly didn't let me stay in the house that night."

"It hurt him pretty bad," Imogene Robinson now says of her husband's reaction to the news. "We were just so stunned, actually. We had never heard anything whatsoever toward that. It was a real shock to us. I think that was the worst part, the shock. And, of course, where we were from, that was just a bad word to say, about anybody."

Robinson believed that his coming out was at God's direction. "I have to tell you—I felt called by God to come out. It seems to me that if God stands for anything, God stands for integrity. And to be a priest, calling other people to integrity, when you're not exercising it yourself—it'll kill you."

Boo soon began seeing another man, and in September, 1987, she remarried. Two months later, Gene was vacationing in St. Croix when he met a Peace Corps worker from Washington, D.C., named Mark Andrew, who had been raised a Roman Catholic. Mark eventually moved to New Hampshire, and the couple bought a house in Weare—substituting the Celebration for a Home, from the Church's Book of Occasional Services, for a marriage ceremony. Imogene and Victor came to visit, and eventually accepted Mark and Gene's new life—and even grew comfortable with the reflected celebrity that attended Gene's election as bishop. "They're out to all their friends now," Robinson says. "Their friends will call them up and say, 'Oh, I saw Vicky Gene on the "Today" show, and he was wonderful.' "

Mark attends the spouses' functions and accompanies Gene on his rounds in the diocese. "My partner has made not only as much of a sacrifice in order to support me in this ministry as any wife of any male bishop ever has but even more so," Robinson says. "He's an incredibly private person, and for him to not only be willing but enthusiastic in his support of my doing this is just an astounding gift to me and to the Church. He is just simply beloved in this diocese."

When Robinson was elected bishop, his seminary classmate Bob Duncan offered his prayers but not his congratulations. To Duncan, it was an occasion for grieving; his church had just taken a turn to heresy. "I was a seminary classmate of Gene Robinson's," he says. "I knew Gene. I knew his wife, his children. But that's what's so terrible, you know? What kind of a church is this?"

If there is someone who embodies the conservatives' idea of the wayward church, it is Frank T. Griswold, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, U.S.A. On a snowy morning last December, I visited Bishop Griswold at the church's national headquarters, on Second Avenue in midtown. He is in the last months of a nine-year term as the head of the Episcopal Church, and it seems unlikely that the Church will easily find another leader who so wholly fits the Episcopal type. Lean and gray, conspicuously erudite, Griswold has an air that suggests good schooling (St. Paul's, Harvard, Oxford) and old stock (while preaching at Canterbury Cathedral once, he mentioned that a direct ancestor had been one of Thomas à Becket's assassins in that cathedral more than eight centuries before). On this particular morning, Griswold seemed a bit on edge, perhaps because of our subject—the discord his church has caused in the Anglican Communion. It will be, to Griswold's obvious regret, the signature of his tenure as Presiding Bishop.

I'd been thinking that morning of something that Bishop Duncan had said: that the theology of the liberal church—Frank Griswold's theology—was so distinct from classical Christianity that it amounted to a different religion. Duncan and his fellow-evangelicals see their Christianity as a religion of transformation, and liberal Christianity as a faith of affirmation. "One has sin and needs a Saviour, the other one simply tells you that you're O.K. as you are," Duncan said. The case of Gene Robinson brings that divergence into relief: is the gay bishop from New Hampshire in need of Christ's redeeming grace or is he a living expression of it?

Griswold answered the question with a question. "Now, of course, what does transformation mean?" he asked. "If you're talking about human sexuality—and all manifestations of sexuality have to be seen under the aegis of the Gospel—there's no question of setting aside Gospel values." By "Gospel values," Griswold does not mean what Bishop Duncan might mean—that is, a plain understanding of Paul's assertion to the Corinthians, for one example, that "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites . . . will inherit the kingdom of God." The values to which Griswold refers are those which order believers' lives in a manner pleasing to God, and those apply as much to gays as to anyone.

"Having been a parish priest before I was a bishop, into the congregations I served came men and women whose affections were ordered to members of the same sex," he says. "They shared some of their struggles with me, and, I must say, I came to respect, deeply, the integrity of their own faithfulness to a particular partner. And I think of one case in which one member of the relationship had multiple sclerosis, and his partner would bring him to church in a wheelchair, and the care, and the selflessness, was palpable. And members of the congregation, along with me, found ourselves saying, 'So what's wrong with this picture? Where is this in some way dishonoring of the Gospel?' Don't we see the fruit of the Spirit in patience and love and self-forgetfulness?"

SPRING FEVER OR SIDE EFFECTS?
Heart palpitations... clammy... butterflies in stomach... dry mouth...

It is true, Griswold says, that from "the classical point of view" sexuality "is to be exercised only within heterosexual, monogamous marriages." But he notes that the church has, through time, come to an understanding of marriage and sexuality that is less rigid than that prescribed by the Bible and church tradition. "The Episcopal Church over the years has come to, let us say, an understanding of the human person that is more sophisticated, possibly, than the understanding on the part of the Biblical authors."

Griswold suggests that it is problematic to try to understand the meaning of the Bible plainly, because the authors of Scripture were, as we are, captives of their time and place. "St. Paul very clearly assumed that everyone was, by nature, heterosexual," he says. Therefore, in Paul's time, homosexuality was a willing choice made by the wicked against God's natural order. Our current understanding, he says, has been altered by God's unfolding revelation of truth.

"Let's talk about truth," he says. "I'm struck by the fact that in the Gospel, in John, Jesus says, 'I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when the Spirit of truth comes, the Spirit will draw from what is mine, and reveal it to you.' Now, when we look at how we have come to understand the cosmos over the centuries, how we've come to understand the complexities of our physicality, and have seen advances in surgery and medicine and all the rest of it, we can say to ourselves, 'Why didn't God simply plant the fullness of this knowledge in us at the beginning? Why has it taken us centuries to be able to cure fatal diseases that existed in the Middle Ages? How unkind and thoughtless of God not to give us all the information at the outset.' And yet, we've been structured in a universe in such a way that truth is progressive."

By this understanding, Gene Robinson presents to the church much the same question that the issue of gay marriage poses to the secular culture: is homosexuality what he chooses or what he is?

"I think, looking at what constitutes sin, in a relationship between two people," Griswold says, "I think you have to ask, Is the relationship in some way abusive? Is it predatory? Is it non-mutual? Is someone being constricted or demeaned by virtue of this relationship? Are they being increased in some way? Are they undergoing a transformation? I mean, I've certainly had people in same-sex relationships say to me, 'I know now what it means to love selflessly, in a way I didn't before.' So, clearly, grace can work in what many people perceive to be an anomalous or, even in some formal dogmatic sense, problematic relationship."

In the current Anglican conflict, echoes can be heard of a larger struggle within Christianity that has been happening for more than a century. With the advance of science and the growing acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution, key theologians and churchmen concluded by the early twentieth century that the old faith had been essentially disproved. They began to imagine a more reasonable Christianity—one less insistent on miracles, resurrections, and a transcendent God who directed human history from a heavenly remove. Higher Criticism informed a new understanding of the historical Jesus; the Hegelian dialectic shaped a new image of an immanent and impersonal God, an unknowable force whose will was worked through human progress.

The new theology met stout resistance within the churches. The "modernist-fundamentalist controversy" of the nineteen-twenties split some of the mainline Protestant denominations, and eventually gave rise to the modern evangelical movement. The Episcopal Church, because of its liturgical unity and comprehensiveness—Elizabeth's notion: Believe what you want, just use this book—was better able to absorb the new thinking, or, at least, to mask it. "Under the guise of Anglican comprehensiveness, and under the cover of Anglo-Catholic worship and liturgy, this alien religion took root in the Western Anglican world," says Leslie Fairfield, a professor of church history at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, a Pennsylvania seminary with an evangelical orientation. "The idea was 'Keep all the same words, change all the meanings, but don't tell the laypeople.' "

It was an Anglican scholar and bishop, John A. T. Robinson, who inspired the "God Is Dead" vogue of the nineteen-sixties, with the publication of his best-selling "Honest to God," which posed the question: "Now that we have rejected the ancients' view of God living in a material heaven above the actual sky, what does God's existence mean?" His theological heir, Bishop Spong, of Newark, published a provocation that he called his "Twelve Theses"—a call to a new Christianity that rejected the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth and bodily resurrection, and most of the rest of traditional Christian doctrine. The central belief of Christian orthodoxy—the substitutionary atonement of Christ on the Cross—Spong, now retired, pronounced "a barbarian idea based on primitive concepts of God."

Within the Episcopal Church, the innate tensions long cherished by Anglicans eventually sharpened into theological conflict, with human sexuality the battleground. After the Church's General Convention resolved in 1979 that ordination of gays was "not appropriate," Spong's assistant bishop ordained an openly gay man into the diaconate. The assistant bishop, Walter Righter, was subsequently brought to church trial on heresy charges, accused of violating the Church's core doctrine; the charges were dismissed on the ground that the Church had no core doctrine that applied. ("The Episcopal Church is committed to a Gospel so vague and spectral that false teaching is impossible," one church critic complained. "The only heresy is to say that there is such a thing as heresy.") Then the 1998 Lambeth Conference, the once-a-decade gathering of worldwide Anglicans, passed the resolution declaring homosexuality "incompatible with Scripture"; within five years, the American church had consecrated a gay bishop. Liberals claimed a prophetic witness to the world, saying that "God is doing a new thing" in the church; conservatives saw rank heresy.

Church leaders, meanwhile, declared themselves helpless to force any resolution. Frank Griswold said the election of Gene Robinson was a local diocesan matter, and expressed surprise that it caused such a stir. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, reminded agitated traditionalists that he was no Pope; he couldn't intervene in the affairs of the American church even if he wished to, which he plainly did not. This institutional incapacity left some conservatives pining for the authoritative teaching and discipline forsaken by their forebears nearly five centuries ago. When many of these issues surfaced in the Catholic Church during the long pontificate of Pope John Paul II, they aroused passionate dissent, and ringing defense, of Church teaching, but all sides were clear on what the Church teaching was. John Paul's defender of the faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, made certain of that. "The problem is that in Anglicanism, as presently constituted, we have no means of officially disciplining people," says Archbishop Drexel Gomez, the Primate of the West Indies. Some, such as Paul Zahl, Dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, began to despair that Anglicanism's very DNA bore the seeds of its undoing. "This whole crisis has revealed a very serious deficiency in the character of Anglicanism," Zahl told me. "It's a severe deficiency in Anglicanism because there isn't really a church teaching in the same way that there is in the Church of Rome. . . . I would say there is a constitutional weakness, which this crisis has revealed, which may in fact prove to be the death of the Anglican project—the death, at least in formal terms, of Anglican Christianity. We've always said that we've had this great insight, and I used to think that we did. But I'm not quite sure whether we're not on very sandy ground. . . . It's at the edge of the abyss. It's about to be extinguished, and that's not histrionic."

It was in this light that some of the American conservatives began to look to the Global South. "It is simple," Akinola told me. "We believe we know the mind of the Lord. We believe we know what he's asking us to do in his holy word, and we simply respond to his command. . . . It is the power of the word, and the Lord has blessed our efforts." In the marketplace of faith, it is hard not to notice the contrasting results. When Gene Robinson arrived at Sewanee in 1965, the Episcopal Church claimed three million six hundred thousand baptized members; church membership has fallen by more than a third in the forty years since. There are more worshippers in Akinola's church of Nigeria on any given Sunday than there are filling the pews of all the Anglican churches of the West combined. Even Frank Griswold admires such fervor. "I do think there is always a need for what I call an evangelical vitality," he says. "In terms of passion for the Gospel and, indeed, love for the risen Christ, these are gifts that the weary West can well learn from."

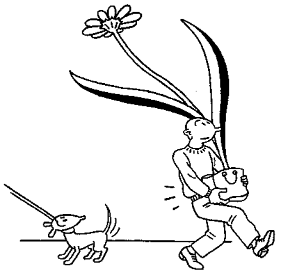
Griswold observes, by way of a small caveat, that the churches of Akinola and Orombi are still relatively young in the faith, just a century or so removed from the missionary stage, their zeal uncomplicated by nuance. But the classical-Christianity-in-amber quality of the Global South is precisely what appeals to many American conservatives. "Because the world didn't really care what Africans thought until about 2004, they were sort of in a hermetically sealed Christian terrarium for a hundred years," Paul Zahl says. "Their Christianity didn't get torpedoed by a lot of Western nihilism."

But it is much more than a brotherly regard for Christian piety that draws the Americans to the churchmen of the Global South. Before taking his leave of the 2003 General Convention that affirmed Gene Robinson, Bob Duncan told the gathering that he and allied bishops would call on the Archbishop of Canterbury and the primates of the world church "to intervene in the pastoral emergency that has overtaken us." The conservative dissidents already had the beginnings of a plan for what they called "realignment." By December, 2003, the initial outlines of the plan were revealed in a letter to potential supporters. "Our ultimate goal is a realignment of Anglicanism on North American soil committed to biblical faith and values, and driven by Gospel mission," the letter said. The aim was to create a "replacement jurisdiction" in the United States, supplanting ECUSA. The next month, in January, 2004, the Anglican Communion Network came into being, and Robert Duncan was elected moderator. This effort was receiving financial support from foundations associated with the family of Richard Mellon Scaife and other conservative donors.

Essential to the network's plan was the support of, and official recognition by, the worldwide church. Anglican provinces representing most of the world's Anglicans soon declared themselves in a state of "broken" or "impaired" communion with the Episcopal Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, responded. He called for a church inquiry into the crisis, and the resultant commission findings, called the Windsor Report, urged ECUSA to express regret over its action and to refrain from further consecration of gay bishops. ECUSA apologized for any unintended pain it had caused the Church, but not for the consecration of Robinson, and it declared a moratorium on the consecration of all bishops, gay or straight.

A meeting of the world's primates was convened in Northern Ireland in early 2005, and some of them refused to share communion with Frank Griswold. At that meeting, the primates asked the churches of the U.S. and Canada (which had endorsed the blessing of gay civil unions) to abstain from the Anglican Consultative Council—the church's most important deliberative body—until after the next Lambeth Conference, in 2008. Akinola and others called on Rowan Williams to withhold a Lambeth invitation from the American church "unless they truly repent."

The Global South primates, in short, did all that the American conservatives could have asked, and more. When several of the primates appeared at a network convention in Pittsburgh last November, they were greeted like rock stars by the twenty-five hundred attendees. Akinola betrayed a hint of impatience with the American conservatives when he said, in his sharp, clipped tones, "Many of you have one leg in ECUSA and one leg in the network. With that, my friends, comes disaster. While that remains, you can't have our support. Because, you see, as we speak here, we have all broken communion with ECUSA. If you want Global South to partner with you, you must let us know exactly where you stand. Are you ECUSA? Or are you network? Which one?"

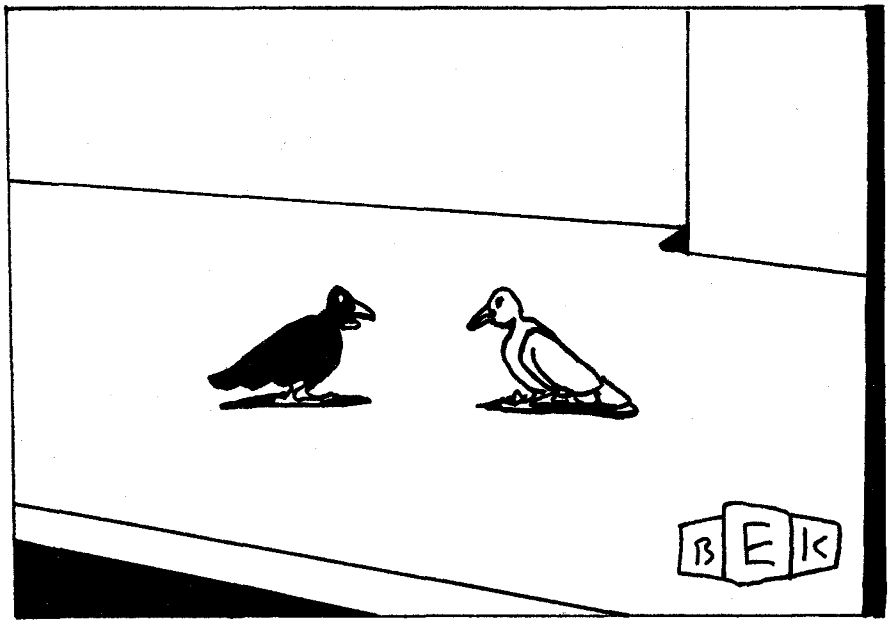


Akinola later told me that he found it hypocritical for American dissidents to encourage action by the Global South so aggressively while remaining affiliated with the Episcopal Church. In defecting from the national church, however, a local parish risks losing its church building and property. In many places, the local Episcopal church resides in one of the oldest, finest buildings in a town's best district. That first network letter outlining the plan for realignment plainly stated, "We seek to retain ownership of our property as we move into this realignment."

Some churches, such as St. James in Newport Beach, California, took the risk in court when the Los Angeles Diocese filed suit to keep its church property. The lawsuit was dismissed, and the church declared victory. (The case is under appeal.) But laws in other states seem to favor the national church. In several instances, when a dissident parish has aligned itself with another province outside the U.S. and stopped sending annual contributions to the Episcopal Church, the church building has been seized by the local bishop bearing a court order. Akinola, whose own ministry started with the scarcest of resources, says the Americans have a clear choice. "I think it has to do with property, school buildings—those are very important things," he says. "You have the right to decide what you want to do. You can keep on with your properties or say, 'Well, it doesn't matter—I can start all over again.' So you have to interpret the faith in your own way. I can't do that."

The evangelical megachurch pastor Rick Warren also addressed the gathering in Pittsburgh, and put the property question to them bluntly. "What's more important is your faith, not your facilities," he said. "The church is people, not the steeple. They might get the building, but you get the blessing." Bob Duncan says that the future looks like a series of unpleasant legal battles—"And the question that the state courts are going to have to figure out is, Who are the Episcopalians?"

That question must also be answered by the worldwide Anglican Communion. One possible outcome is that the Archbishop of Canterbury will effectively cast the Episcopal Church loose by withholding an invitation to the Lambeth Conference. That seems highly unlikely, but Canterbury also risks losing the Global South bloc in a massive realignment, which would effectively isolate a diminishing Western church.



*"I can't believe you symbolize peace when you're such a bitch."*

All sides agree that much depends upon the coming General Convention of the Episcopal Church this June, the first national convention since Robinson's affirmation. Anglicans instinctively seek the middle ground, and there are signs that compromise may yet be possible. About a dozen key bishops (at one time including both Bob Duncan and Gene Robinson) have conferred privately over the past year, partly in an effort to devise an alternative system of episcopal oversight for parishes that are irreconcilably at odds with their local bishop. This is a fundamental issue to both the dissident parishes and the national church, because property and money are at stake. When St. James Church, in California, withdrew from ECUSA, taking its property with it into a new alliance with the church of Uganda, the Diocese of Los Angeles lost not only the church and its buildings but also an annual contribution that amounted to millions of dollars over the years.

Potentially more significant, perhaps, is the work of a special commission established by the Episcopal Church to directly address the crisis posed by the affirmation of Gene Robinson at the last General Convention, in 2003. In a report scheduled for release this week, the Special Commission on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion was expected to recommend a course of action that amounts to a step-down on several contentious points. The report was expected to urge the national church to ask "repentance" for its actions in 2003, where hitherto ECUSA has expressed only "regret" for any pain it may have caused within the worldwide communion. Further, the report was expected to recommend a General Convention resolution mandating retreat on the question of same-sex blessings. In this compromise, the Church would not allow the performance of public rites joining homosexual couples, as in the blessing of a union; local priests would, however, be allowed to offer blessings to gay couples not based on the official church rites.

On the central point of contention, the consecration of gay bishops, the commission is expected to urge the Church to proceed down the path taken by Gene Robinson only with "extreme caution." That is the sort of phrasing that might placate conservatives, and could provide convention delegates with the typically Episcopal opportunity to kick the problem down the road, getting them safely past the Lambeth Conference in 2008. In this case, however, evasion may not be possible. The Diocese of California is scheduled to elect a new bishop next month, and three of its seven candidates are openly gay. If California elects a gay bishop, and the General Convention withholds its consent, the Episcopal Church will face a new revolt, this time from the left. At least one church official has already begun to ask whether the Episcopal Church's most prudent course might not be voluntary withdrawal from the worldwide Anglican Communion, thus taking a stand as a church pledged to human justice.

No one views such a possibility lightly, and for Gene Robinson the struggle has not been without personal cost. "Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I am writing to you from an alcohol-treatment center," he e-mailed his New Hampshire colleagues in February. But he was not abandoning the struggle. "I eagerly look forward to continuing my recovery in your midst." He returned home from rehab and resumed his ministry last month.

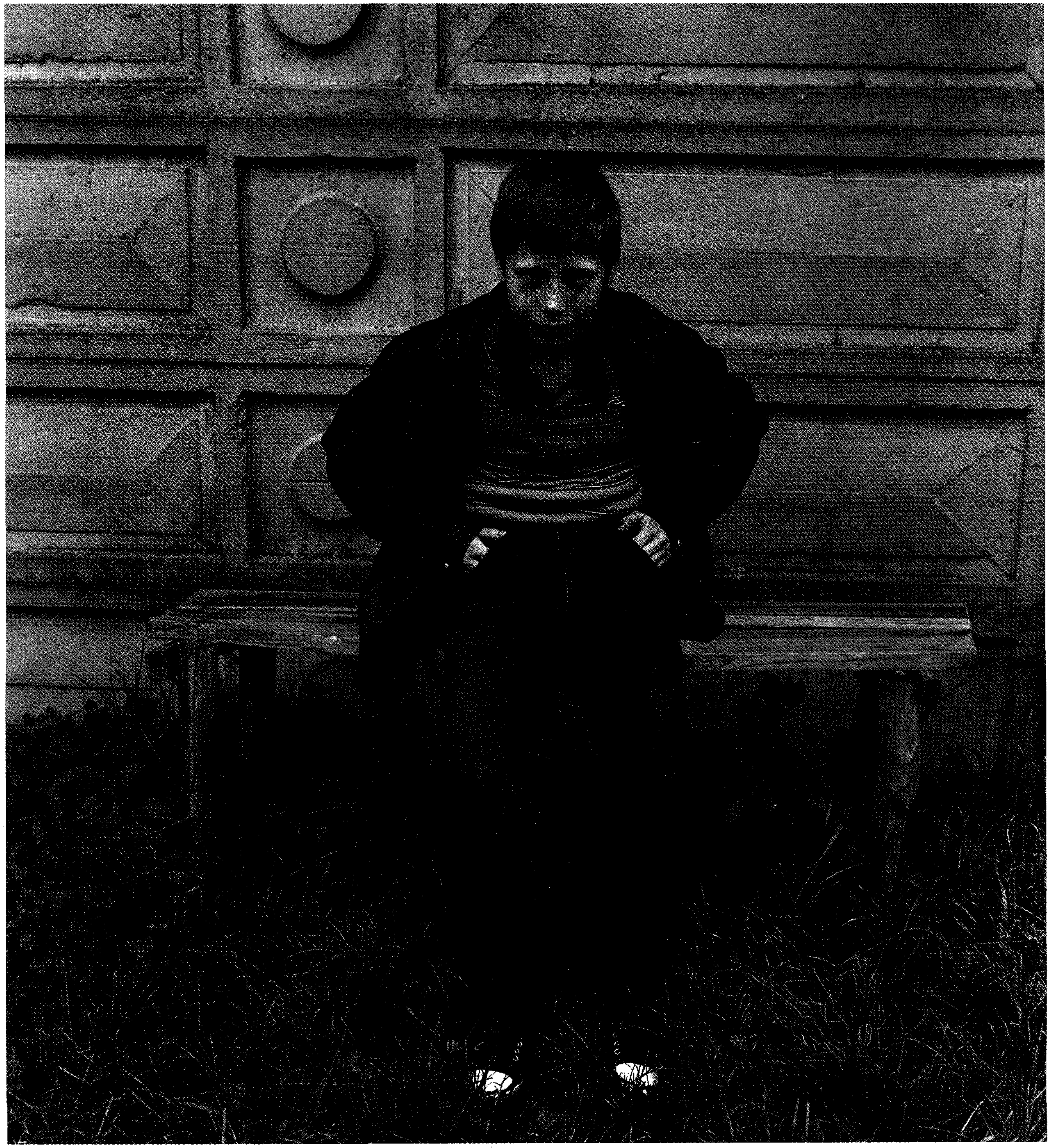
For Jim Naughton, the communications director for the liberal Diocese of Washington, D.C., any compromise with principle would have dire consequences for public relations. "What is the message we push to explain our desire to stay in the Anglican Communion?" he asks. "What is the slogan we put on our literature? Here is what I have come up with: 'Join us in a diplomatically intricate, ethically ambiguous, and sometimes publicly humiliating tightrope walk toward Jesus.' "

Naughton said, "I think it needs work." ♦

FICTION

# THE TROJAN SOFA

BY BERNARD MACLAVERTY



It's dark—pitch black—and everything's shaking and bumping. I'm not scared—just have some what-if knots in my gut. What if they have a dog? That would be me—well and truly. Or a burglar alarm, with laser beams, like they have in the movies. And when you walk through the beam, which you can't see, the alarm goes off in the nearest cop shop. But my Da would've asked all these questions when he was selling. My Da sells anything and everything, bric-a-brac, furniture, you name it. He sells all over the place—fairs, car-boot sales, a stall in the Markets—but quality stuff, or as much of it as he can get. He's good, friendly, knows what he's doing.

"This is a good piece—worth quite a bit, as you well know." And he'd laugh with the customer who had just paid up. "If you'd more stuff like this you'd want to have an alarm in the house."

"I don't like alarms," or "I've already got the best on the market." And that'd be my Da clued in. "You wouldn't want dog hairs all over good fabric like that." "I don't have a dog," and that would be my Da clued in a bit more. He's a dab hand at getting people to tell him things.

I'm on my left side—the side I sleep on at night—because I know there'll not be much turning round in the foreseeable future. My knees bent only slightly. I've all my bits and pieces.

"You've bugger all to do except keep your wits about you and open the door. In this case two doors."

I'm in my first year at grammar school. Got the eleven-plus—no problem. Even though I hadn't reached eleven. That's good for a boy from the Markets. When my Da went up to the College, the President told him I got the highest marks of anybody in Northern Ireland. Smart boy wanted. I can hear my Da's voice now talking to Uncle Eamon.

"Two flights of stairs and you're outa puff already?"

"It's the bloody smoking," I hear Eamon say.

"Why don't you give it up? It was no problem for me."

"Your right hand down a bit. Take it easy."

I can hear the bumping of their feet on carpeted stairs.

"It weighs a fuckin ton," says Uncle Eamon.

"Watch your tongue in front of the boy," says my Da. I hear them both laughing.

He has very strong opinions, has my Da. A war is two sides, one against the other, he says. It's as simple as that. "The wrong done to this country was so great that we can do *anything* in retaliation." If it's done against the Brits, it's O.K. by him. "A broken phone is a British liability," he says. "So's a burnt bus. They're things that have to be replaced—by the English Exchequer."

That's why he likes to deal with the other side. I was there one time when he sold a three-piece suite to this guy, the most Orangeman-looking man I've ever seen. You could tell what he was from a mile away—the big fat jowls, the mustache, the accent. "Your address, sir?" When he says the part of town where he lives, my Da looks at Uncle Eamon as if to say "Wouldn't you know?"

"Yes—we can deliver free," says my Da. So the next day I'm into the sofa with my gear and the hessian is stapled back onto the frame. It's usually an overnight. Next morning when everybody's away to work and the place is quiet I Stanley-knife my way out and open the door. My Da and Uncle Eamon are sitting there in the van smiling. And in they come. The sofa's the first thing they lift, because it has all the evidence in it—where I've bed-and-breakfasted. The modus operandi. Then they clear the place. And it's one up for old Ireland.

Before we did it for the first time, my Da said to me, "It's up to yourself. You can say yea or nay. I'd never force anybody to do something like this—never mind one of my own. But I must say it *is* for Ireland."

"Ireland the Brave," says Uncle Eamon from the sidelines.

What I'm in at the moment—so I've been told by my Da, the expert—is a Victorian sofa. It smells of dust, dry built-up-over-the-years dust. It's worse because we're on the move and everything's getting shaken up. Sneezing's a danger. There's a bump against something and I bang my head.

"Be careful," says my Da to Eamon. "The Major'll be none too pleased if his property comes damaged."

"Niall won't be too happy, either," says Eamon.

That's me he's talking about. Niall. Niall Donnelly. Sometimes my Da calls me Skinny-ma-link. They set the sofa down and I hear a bell ringing in the distance. The door opens and a new English voice starts talking. This whole thing is like a play on the radio. You can hear everything but see nothing. And then a woman's voice joins in. There's a lotta bumping and angling so's they can get through the doorways—so much so that, when it goes upright, I have to hang on like grim death to the wooden frame. Like the ladder thing in the park you go hand over hand on.

"Here?" says my Da.

"There, with its back to the wall," says the woman.

My Da rabbits on a bit with the Major and there's a lotta laughing while my Uncle Eamon goes back to the van for the clock. I can just see my Da, the way he throws his head back and opens his mouth wide enough to see his fillings. And Eamon smiling on his way down the stairs. He seems to take for ages. It's so bad the Major actually says, "He's taking his time."

"He'll be having a fly fag."

When Uncle Eamon does come back they all listen to the chimes and the Major sets it to the one he likes the best. He also chooses to have it chime at quarter-hours. They set the right time by their watches and there's the tickety sound of the clock being wound up. Eventually they go and I hear their voices getting weaker and the slam of the main door of the flat. I feel the vibration through the floor. There is silence now, and I become conscious of my breathing—making sure my nose is clear. The man says something I can't hear to the woman. She laughs. I guess they are looking at the sofa. Then they go away.

I hear knives and forks and plates rattling in another room. A radio is switched on but it's posh music. They must be eating their tea. There's a great smell which makes me hungry. Bacon or meat of some sort. Or onions—I love fried onions.

It's very hard to know how much time has passed. My Da says I'm far better off without a watch. You're more aware of time passing if you're always looking to check. Anyway I couldn't see a watch, it's so dark. But it might be a kinda comfort to know how much longer I've gotta be in here. When I hear them actually talking in the other room I change my position.

MONIKA MERVA (1999)

Move my leg a bit—change where the frame is biting into my backside—move my pillows around a bit. I'll eat my sandwiches in the middle of the night, when they've gone to bed. My older brother says when I eat it sounds like an army marching through muck. "Keep your mouth closed." Then I hear the clock chiming again. It does those chimes you hear on the news over a picture of Big Ben and Westminster. Then it bongs eight times.

My Da and Uncle Eamon had stopped the van out in the country to look the place over before they staple-gunned me in.

"How can you be so sure he's a major?"

"Instinct," says my Da. "Maybe not a major. But Army of some sort. All upper-crust Brits are. And they're as obvious as punks. Instead of a Mohican, a tweed cap. Leather shoes, and that voice, that cut-glass voice."

"If you were a Brit, would you allow furniture in without checking it?" My Da didn't say anything. "That's where they put fire bombs in the shops—down the sides of sofas."

I'd gone over the hedge for a last pee, after drinking a can of Coke. I could see the house was a huge mansion with turrets and stuff, in among trees and gardens. It was about a mile away up a tarmac drive. My Da said the house had been turned into about ten flats by some developer. And he went on and on about the olden days and how could any one man have lived in such a place—to have it all to himself with servants tugging the forelock and kowtowing to him. Uncle Eamon spat out the van window.

When the Major and his woman finish their tea, they switch off the radio and come into the room. Then the piano playing starts. Sort of rhythmic stuff. No point to it. Was it him or was it her playing? I was just glad there was something to listen to—to pass the time. I knew it was actual playing and not a radio because sometimes the notes would stop and the same bit would be played again. Better. After a while the playing stopped. Someone was clapping—pretend applause. Clap, clap, clap.

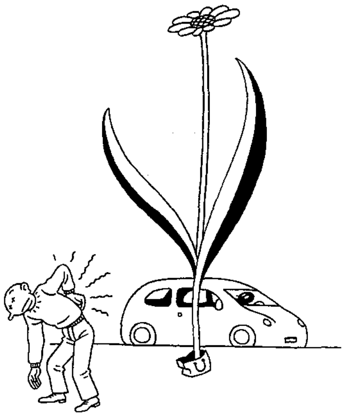
"Bravo," said the Major. "Play me the Mozart."

The piano started again. And went on and on and on.

With that kinda music, you know when the end is coming. It winds itself up. After that, everything goes quiet.

I know they are in the room but I can't hear anything. I can sense someone sitting on the sofa, then getting off again. They're speaking very quietly—sorta murmuring. This goes on for ages and then they start exercising—sometimes on the sofa, sometimes on the floor. In school they have this crazy bastard of a gym teacher who has a yelpy voice. "Running on the spot. Go!" "Ten press-ups. Go!" And he reserves the highest and loudest note for yelping the word "go." Before the Major and his woman eventually stop the exercising and the gasping, the penny drops. They're doing sex. Having a ride. Not two inches away. And I can't see a thing. And then they go back to the murmuring. I can't make out a single word. The clock chimes nine and the TV is switched on. The music is for the News. Somebody sits down on the sofa. The news is the usual boring stuff. When it comes to the Northern Ireland bit, there are two murders. A prison officer who worked at the Maze tried to start his car and it blew up and he got killed. Boohoo. Lend me a hankie. The other was a drive-by shooting on the Antrim Road. A boy of seventeen had been shot, and died on the way to hospital. If it's the Antrim Road he'll be one of ours. There was three explosions, but nobody got hurt because there was warnings.

I'm feeling a bit sleepy but keep myself awake by sticking my fingernail into the back of my other hand. I don't think I snore. But you can't be sure. A comedy program comes on—there's a lotta laughing from the audience. Canned stuff. It goes on for ages. When the clock chimes eleven, the Major and his wife go to bed. I hear the click of the light switch going off and I'm aware that the darkness has increased. I hear them doing things in the distance—running taps, brushing teeth, a kettle clicking off when it boils. A hot-water bottle for her, maybe. After a while everything goes silent. At last I can turn. And fix my pillows. I don't even risk a wee groan. This must have been what it was like "durin the war." All the old ones at the stalls talk about "durin the war." They never stop. I reach out for my sandwiches—touch and rip the cling wrap. Ham and cheese. I normally like egg and onion, but my Da said it's too risky—it would stink to high heaven. Give me away. Rosaleen made them. She lives with my Da now. I like her—she's a good laugh. My mother died of cancer when I was eight—right after my First Communion.



Chewing in the quiet like this is weird. The inside of your head is filled with noises, crunchings and squelchings—moving muscles and teeth clicks and a roaring in your ears. And I think of myself as a mouse—the way other people hear a mouse. They sit up in bed at night and hear small noises, scratchings, pitter-patterings. "There's the mouse," they say. "I must set the trap tomorrow."

This is the third Trojan sofa I've done. The first was the worst. I was nervous and needed to pee a lot. Nearly filled the poly bag I had. Fresh piss is really warm. And, see, trying to get the knot outa the neck of the bag when it was half full when you wanted to go for a second and third time—that was awful. Anyway, it all went fine. A cinch. It was funny being in a house with Union Jacks and pictures of the Queen on the walls. Really spooky.

On Saturday afternoons I help Rosaleen with her stall and she gives me a tenner. All the books are priced in pencil on the inside leaf, so it's dead easy. My Da's stall is about three over from Rosaleen's, so I seen the Major that day. Nothing remarkable about him at all—heavyset, in a tweed jacket, open-neck shirt, wavy hair getting a bit gray—but my Da knew the voice. The voice is a dead giveaway. He was interested in this old-fashioned clock for his mantelpiece, paid a lotta attention to it, listened to the different chimes it could do and all. Then he took the Victorian sofa as well. And now here I am lying in the back of it ateing sandwiches. I don't wanna wash

## THE CENSOR

In any company, he listens hard
For signs of vanity and self-regard,
Reacting to each name that's dropped, to each
Complacent anecdote or turn of speech
With subtle indications of surprise—
A wince, perhaps, a widening of the eyes,
Or a slight lifting of the brow, addressed
To the egomaniac within his breast.

—*Richard Wilbur*

them down. As little liquid as possible. So I just knock them around inside my mouth till they go away. It takes bloody ages. I don't bother with the crusts.

At this very minute my Da and Rosaleen'll be coming back after a night in the pub. He takes pints of lager; she has her vodkas and Coke. When they come home me and my brother hang around being nice. They usually bring a crowd back with them—maybe a couple of fiddlers who can play jigs and reels, or singers with guitars. It's a bit of a laugh and when he's in good form my Da's liable to put his hand in his pocket. He never remembers the next day. So you can try and tap him again. Rosaleen hugs us and says things like "Yis are not mine—but I love ya." Then she'll punch my Da if he's beside her. "My womb cries out," she says and everybody'll laugh.

I start to feel really sleepy now. I think about having a piss but whatever way I was upended coming through the door I can't find the poly bag. It's probably down by my feet somewhere. And I can't bend. After that I must have dozed off, because I waken up halfway through the Westminster chimes. I lie there counting all twelve of the strokes that follow the tune. Then I hear a creak of a door in the distance. Somebody on the stairs.

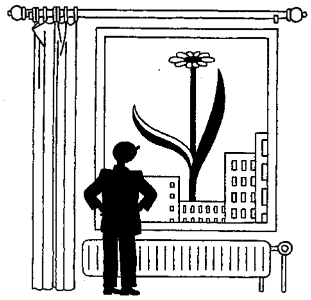
Jesus, maybe he's rumbled me. But how? What have I just done? Did I snore? Did I give myself away somehow? Did he hear me chewing? No chance. Wait. The light clicks on and I can see faintly around me after the blackness. It must be the Major because he clears his throat—a deep sound, not a woman. He doesn't come near the sofa. So it's a false alarm. He shuffles over to where I think the mantelpiece must be. He is doing something footery because he's cursing and mumbling to himself. Then he says "Ha!" and leaves the room. The light goes off and I hear nothing more. What was that all about? Maybe he was sleepwalking. Did people really do that? Walk about the place sound asleep? Uncle Eamon says he woke up one night and he was standing pissing into a suitcase. Maybe the Major's turned off the chimes. And I'll be able to get a bit of shut-eye. "Thanks and praises be to God"—Rosaleen says that all the time.

I don't remember anything much of what my mother said. She smiled a lot—or did I get that from photographs of her? Sitting in the park. On beaches. With other girls on the wee wall outside Granda's. And the styles. Her hair and her clothes—they were just embarrassing. When she died she went yellow. I seen her in the coffin. It had the lid off before the funeral. That was a thing she said, "Yella as a duck's foot." I can remember that. "So-and-so had the jaundice—he was as yella as a duck's foot." I lie thinking about her for a while. My Da seemed to take a long time to get over it. If any grownup on the street mentioned her to me—"Aw, I knew your mother"—I just wanted to cry. And that went on for years. I don't have very many friends. Most of them are grown up—like Uncle Eamon and the ones who come back to the house after the pub. I don't really like the friends who are my own age. Danny Breen and Eugene Magee. I fight with them a lot. They're so stupid playing. They squabble and fall out about the rules for everything. And they cheat all the time. It's impossible to knock around with them. "You do this." "No I don't." "Yes you do—for I seen ya." "Ya fuckin did not." Like politicians in Stormont.

I can't sleep because I'm still fairly uptight. But I'm relaxed enough to be able to think about the way things are. The second time we pulled the scam it was a woman who owned the flat. She was high up in the Civil Service at Stormont. My Da said it was a cover for something to do with the H-blocks. But when I got out of the sofa I couldn't believe the place. It was the worst I ever seen. Everything everywhere. Newspapers and high-heeled shoes and magazines and half-drunk cupsa tea. Dirty knickers, dressing gowns, dresses and blouses flung all over the place. And tissues. I've never seen as many bunched-up tissues in my life. A fire hazard. And the only neat thing in the whole place was her manicure set and the ten wee nail clippings on a black coffee table—each one a wee arc. How will this woman know we've burgled her? She'll not know for a week. Unless she wants to watch the telly. Or play something on the video.

The smell of the dust inside the sofa for some reason makes me feel sad. It's not a bad smell. It's just sad. And it won't go away. The smell dries inside my mouth. I try to get in the habit of mouth breathing because it's quieter. And I begin to dream. I see myself dreaming in the darkness and then I wake up in the darkness. Not knowing where I am. And back to dreaming again. In one dream I'm in school and nobody in the class knows what "onomatopoeia" is except me. But I can't put my hand up. I'm paralyzed. Another dream is of me snoring. And jerking awake to stop me snoring. Rosaleen puts me in the bottom of a wardrobe and covers me with coats to keep the sound to a minimum. Then I wake up.

Wide awake. I can sense it's light—morning light, not electric. I can make out areas and shades. I check where my Stanley knife is. It's one of those with a safety-slide thing at the side for retracting and bringing out the blade. I should have been awake earlier. And I know there's something wrong. The first thing I hear is a man's footsteps walking away from the sofa. Quickly. I just know by the way he's walking that he's onto me. I hear him lifting the phone. He uses one word. Police. Then he starts talking about an intruder in his house—trying to keep his voice down. I have to be quick. I get the Stanley knife and slide out the blade—stick it through the material above my head—out into the room. Then I pull hard. A kinda ripping sound. A thin line of light. A tent flap. And me getting out of it. Moving my stiff legs. Backing out. My feet are on the floor and I straighten up. My back feels like it's broke in two. I look down the hallway where the Major is on the phone. The door of the room is open and his eyes are watching me.



"Freeze!"

It's a scream that scares the shit outa me. The Major moves his arms upward, and now I can see he has a shotgun aimed at my head. The phone falls and swings on its wiggly cord. He starts to walk toward me. I see more and more clearly both barrels—two black holes—as they point straight at my face. He's as white as a sheet.

"Freeze, you bastard." My stomach swoops. Again and again. His voice is like the gym teacher's. Yelpy. Because he's scared shitless. I could have been anything. So I do as I'm told. Try not to frighten him into doing something foolish. But I start to shake. I hope he doesn't notice me shaking. "You fucking piece of shit. I've a good mind to kill you right now. Before the police arrive." I'm still behind the sofa, between it and the wall. He walks past me and goes to the front door to check that it is firmly closed. My heart's beating like mad. Then the clock chimes—the whole Westminster followed by nine dings. He must have turned it back on earlier. When I was asleep. Now I can hear the clock ticking. Or is it my imagination. Myself breathing.

"Do everything nice and slow or I might just pull this trigger. Put that blade down."

Very deliberately, with my thumb, I retract the blade into the handle and set it on the seat of the sofa. It's weird. I'm gonna be shot in the face and yet the thing that annoys me most is—the room isn't the way I thought it was. It's much, much bigger. The mantelpiece is on the wrong wall and the piano—a grand piano with a big fin sticking up in the air—is over by the bay window. I didn't even know the room had a bay window. Everything's in the wrong place.

"You're a bit young for this game." The cut-glass voice. Like Prince Charles. "Who put you up to this?" My hands are resting on the back of the sofa. It's velvety material—gives under my fingers when I press. I haven't a clue what to do. I've never been caught before. The only advice I ever heard was my Da's. "Whatever you say, say nothing." But he was talking about guys getting interrogated in Castlereagh. Guys getting tortured.

Another thing—I badly need a piss. Even more since he scared me. You can see the Major is delighted when he sees what age I am. He keeps moving about. Swaggering almost—like the cat that got the cream. He begins getting some color back in his face. His wife must be away to work, because there's no sign of her. He begins talking ninety to the dozen. Still with the gun levelled at my head.

"I was just thinking, I'll try out my new sofa—read the paper. At first I didn't believe what I was hearing. I kept thinking, There's someone else in this room. Breathing." He shakes his head in disbelief. "It wasn't snoring—just long breaths. Who are you working for?"

I don't want to say anything. Don't want to give anything away. I look down, like I'm in pain. I'm pressing myself hard against the back of the sofa.

"I need the toilet," I say.

"Oh—it speaks, does it?" He kinda smirks. "Go in the police station."

"I'm gonna wet myself." He just stares at me. "I'm gonna wet the carpet."

He thinks about this and stares at me. Like a teacher when he hears an excuse he doesn't believe. Like he thinks there's more to it.

"Please," I say. "I've gotta go now." I grip the front of my jeans to stop myself and close my eyes—tight. As if every muscle was connected—even my eyes were contributing to holding it in. The Major now sees it as a real threat. To his fawn carpet. He'd never get rid of the smell. He waves me out from behind the sofa with the shotgun. He goes in front of me and beckons me. He leads me into a panelled hallway. There are various brown doors off it. One is open and I can see office chairs in front of big drawing boards. Still my fist is bunched at my flies. The Major indicates another door. I open it but it only leads to another. In between there is a washing machine and a dryer and a big wash basket.

He holds the door open with the toe of his brown leather shoe. I open the next door into the bathroom. He follows me in and nods to the toilet. I'm still burstin but I don't like taking my thing out in front of him. He sits down on the side of the bath and keeps pointing the gun at me. So I half turn my back on him and take my thing out.

But being watched this closely nothing happens. I've gone into some kinda block. I look at the wall in front of me. There's a framed diploma. What a place to hang a diploma. It's for Architecture. For somebody called Dunstan Luttrell. At the same time I'm trying to think of a plan. To get away. There's a narrow frosted-glass window to my left but it looks well and truly closed. Anyway we're two floors up, which is a long way down. Then when the piss starts it nearly drills a hole in the delph. It goes on and on and on—like it's never going to stop, making an awful lotta noise in the bowl.

"You sound like a man on stilts after a night on the beer," says the Major. He's making jokes. There's no way this guy is going to shoot me if I make a run for it. And he wouldn't be fit enough to catch me. Fat bastard. Eventually I stop peeing and give myself a wee shake and put it away. I give a wee shivery shudder because of losing my central heating. I continue to stand at the toilet bowl. "So you've been in there all night." I nod my head before I can stop myself. Give him no information whatsoever. Maybe he's remembering doing the sex. Maybe he's embarrassed about it. If I leg it this minute, I'll have time to get down onto the road and into the van before the cops arrive. Maybe the traffic is bad. He waves the gun toward the hallway. I start to move past the mirror and the washbasin. My face is too pale. "Wash your hands." I don't know whether he's kidding or not. The gun's pointing at me. I turn on the tap and wash my hands. It's that soap with the wee label that never goes away. Imperial Leather. The last thing to go is the wee label. How do they make it do that? I reach out to get the towel and he screams again.

"Do not fucking touch anything in this house! Scumbag." I shake my hands a bit, wipe them on my jeans. He is so angry I'm afraid he might pull the trigger by accident. He goes out the door with the gun still trained on me and he waits in the laundry bit and waves me through. I decide this is the time. If I'm gonna go—I have to do it now. He won't have the balls. I open the door into the hallway and slam it as hard as I can after me. I hear him shouting. And I run. His hands are full with the gun. As I race past the sofa I lift the Stanley knife and pocket it. I get to the front door of the flat. By this time the Major is out of the laundry room and putting the shotgun up to his shoulder. Which means he's standing still and I'm running.

"Stop or I'll shoot!" he screams. The front door takes two hands. My back quakes expecting to be shot. The lower handle and the Yale lock. I get both open—all the time waiting for my head to explode. But he can't do it—he doesn't have the guts. And I'm through the door and running down the central stairs about four at a time. Steadying myself with my hand on the bannisters. And out the main door and leggin it across the lawn to get cover from some trees and bushes. The speed I'm going. It's a bright day full of sunshine with a blue sky. I'm high on adrenaline. And after a night with a mouth full of dust it feels great. I want to yell, "Fuck you, Major! Fuck the Brits!" I zigzag through the wood as far as the road, looking at where my feet land, avoiding tree roots, kicking dead leaves. The sunlight flickers as I'm dancing down dips and sprinting up slopes. I spot the white of the van in a lay-by about half a mile away. I hear a police nee-naw in the distance. By the time I get to the lay-by I'm completely knackered. My Da is in the driver's seat facing the house, and Uncle Eamon's having a look through the binoculars at what he thinks is a sparrow hawk hovering over the motorway. The police Land Rover trundles past heading for the big house. I'm coming up behind the van and they don't see me. I bang the side.

Uncle Eamon opens the door and looks down at me.

"Where did you come from?"

"Niall!" shouts my Da.

I jump up into the van. I can hardly talk for panting. "Get outa here." My Da switches on, indicates, and we start driving.

"He caught me." And I tell them the whole disaster.

The next morning was Saturday and we were all standing about in the Markets.

"What have they got on us?" Eamon says. "What can they prove? Was anything taken? It wasn't 'breaking and entering.' For there was no 'breaking.' And no 'entering.' If anything the boy was 'exiting.'"

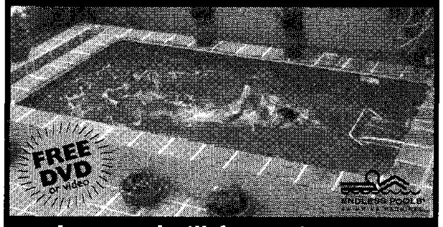
"And very fast, by the sound of it," says Rosaleen.

"I'm sure the Major's in Intelligence," my Da says.

The next thing is the cops turn up. Out of an armored Land Rover. Machine guns, flak jackets, the whole gear. They question my Da and he spins them some yarn about catching me drunk on cider and beating me and falling out with me and me running away to hide in the sofa he was repairing and falling asleep and then him stapling it up and delivering it with me inside. And them all laughing the way he told it—even the R.U.C. men.

Then the cops talked to me—Rosaleen had her arm round me the whole time—and I backed up what my Da said. "Leave the poor wee guy alone," Rosaleen kept saying. I also told them I was very anxious to get outa the Major's house. With that man threatening me with a shotgun. And me only eleven. The cops threatened to bring me in front of a magistrate but nothing ever came of it.

About the Markets the talk was of me being the only burglar to leave his victim richer by a bowlful of piss and a couple of crusts. The Major *did* turn out to be the famous English architect Dunstan Luttrell, like on the diploma. Not long after that, his photo was all over the papers for designing an oratory for some nuns. The press made a big thing about it. English architect, Irish nuns. Protestant-Catholic coöperation. Still my Da said the architecture was a cover story—everybody in Intelligence work had one. They like to keep us in the dark, he said. ♦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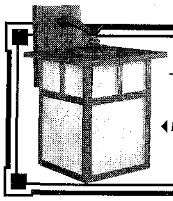
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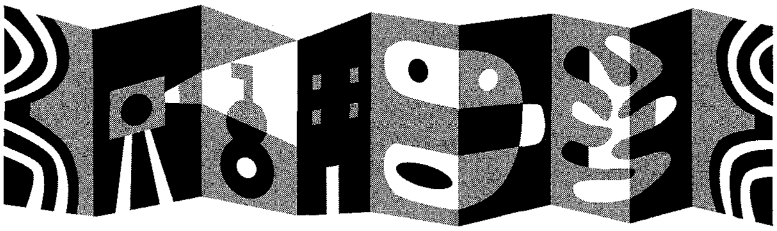
# THE CRITICS



## A CRITIC AT LARGE

# STAGE LEFT

*The struggles of Clifford Odets.*

BY JOHN LAHR

On April 17th, to mark the centennial of the birth of the playwright Clifford Odets, Lincoln Center Theatre will open a new production of “Awake and Sing!,” Odets’s first full-length play and the one that made him a literary superstar in 1935, at the age of twenty-eight. In the years that followed, this magazine dubbed Odets “Revolution’s No. 1 Boy”; *Time* put his face on its cover; Cole Porter rhymed his name in song (twice); and Walter Winchell coined the word “Bravodets!” “Of all people, *you* Clifford Odets are the nearest to understand or *feel* this American reality,” his friend the director Harold Clurman wrote in 1938, urging him “to write, write, write—because we need it so much.” “You are the *Man*,” Clurman told him.

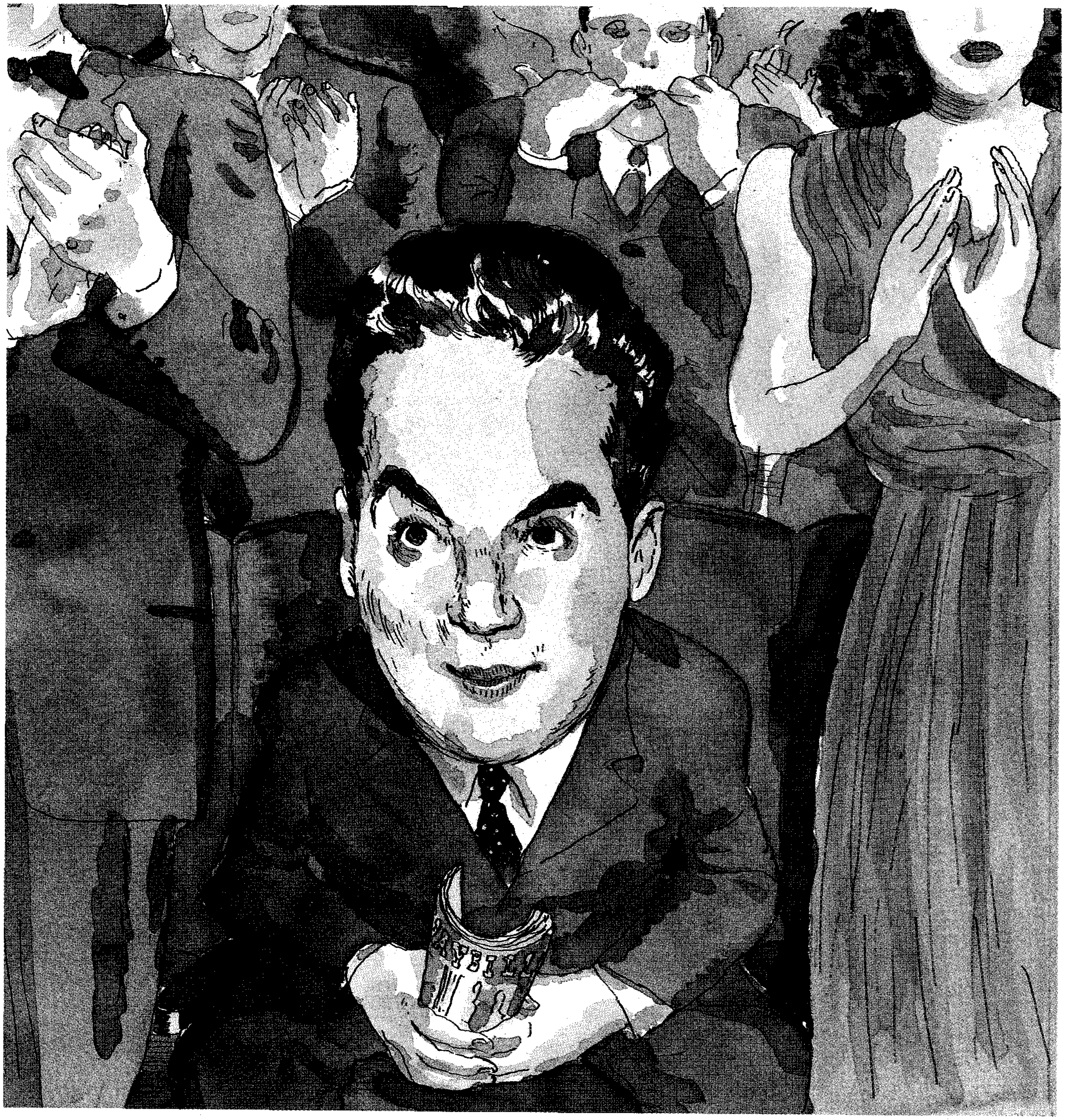
Odets died, of colon cancer, on August 14, 1963, a month after his fifty-seventh birthday. Nine weeks later, in a high-ceilinged hall above a kosher restaurant, Elia Kazan, the artistic director of the newly minted Lincoln Center Repertory, convened the first rehearsal of the company’s first play, Arthur Miller’s “After the Fall.” As Kazan rose to address the gathered theatricals—among them Miller himself, who had been influenced by Odets’s “unashamed word joy”—Odets was much on his mind. Throughout the early thirties, Kazan and Odets, as members of the Group Theatre, had been sidekicks and disgruntled warriors in the same artistic battles. Kazan had shared Odets’s dreams of greatness and of change; they had also shared a railroad flat on West Fifty-seventh Street—the apartment, “saturated with disappointment,” Kazan later said, where Odets wrote “Awake and Sing!,” in a room so small that his typewriter, which he nicknamed Ambition Corona, had to rest on his lap. Kazan had been among the players who shouted “Strike, strike, strike!” at the finale of “Waiting for Lefty,” Odets’s one-act agitprop salvo heard around the world in 1935. He had appeared in Odets’s first Broadway hit, “Golden Boy,” and in his last play for the Group Theatre, “Night Music.” He had also been a regular visitor in Hollywood, where Odets spent the last two decades of his life writing screenplays that he referred to as “fudge” and “candy pie,” and, in films such as “Sweet Smell of Success” (1957) and plays, later made into movies, such as “The Big Knife” (1949) and “The Country Girl” (1950), mining the legend of his own collapse.

“The tragedy of our times in the theatre is the tragedy of Clifford Odets,” Kazan began, before defending his late friend against the accusations of failure that had appeared in his obituaries. “His plan, he said, was to . . . come back to New York and get [some new] plays on. They’d be, he assured me, the best plays of his life. . . . Cliff wasn’t ‘shot.’ . . . The mind and talent were alive in the man.” On his deathbed, at the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, according to Kazan, Odets had “raised his fist for the last time in his characteristic, self-dramatizing way and said, ‘Clifford Odets, you have so much still to do!’ ”

Odets had not always resisted the notion of death. By the time he was twenty-five, he had tried to kill himself three times. He was a man of intemperate romantic emotion, haunted by a sense of doom and of transcendence. “I am homeless wherever I go, always lonely,” he wrote at the height of his early fame, in his fascinating 1940 journal, published under the title “The Time Is Ripe.”

The first child of three, he was born in 1906, in Philadelphia, to ill-matched first-generation immigrant parents. Pearl Geisinger had emigrated from Romania when she was eight. At sixteen, she was married off to Lou Odets, a pathological powerhouse from Russia, whose cocksureness was contradicted by the modesty of his achievement. Sixteen months later, Pearl gave birth to Clifford. Her life was a history of abdication and lamentation. Trapped, voiceless, and chronically exhausted by her children—her second child, Genevieve, was crippled by polio—Pearl salted away pennies from her family allowance for an “escape fund,” which she kept in her sewing basket. (By the time she died, in 1935, she had amassed the considerable sum of three thousand dollars.) “Make a break or spend the rest of your life in a coffin,” a character in “Awake and Sing!” pleads to his unhappily married lover. In the play, the woman leaves her family to claim her desires; Pearl never did. Instead, she incarcerated herself at home, cleaning obsessively (she was nicknamed Sanitary Pearl) and enduring her husband’s mockery and philandering, punishing him sometimes with days of silence.

According to Margaret Brenman-Gibson, in the superb biography “Clifford Odets, American Playwright,” the family atmosphere was so deadly that the children “dreaded bringing friends home.” After Genevieve’s illness, when Odets was four, “no one could recall seeing Pearl kiss him.” “She wanted to be consoled,” Odets later wrote. “So did I. She was lonely, distressed and aggrieved; so was I. As a child, I expected to be petted, brought in (not cast out), consoled, and comforted; and she begrudgingly would do none of these things for me; she was, after all, a child herself.” He added, “Any



*After seeing Odets's "Waiting for Lefty," "none of us was ever to be the same again," Elia Kazan said. "Cliff was to become a god."*

BARRY BLITT

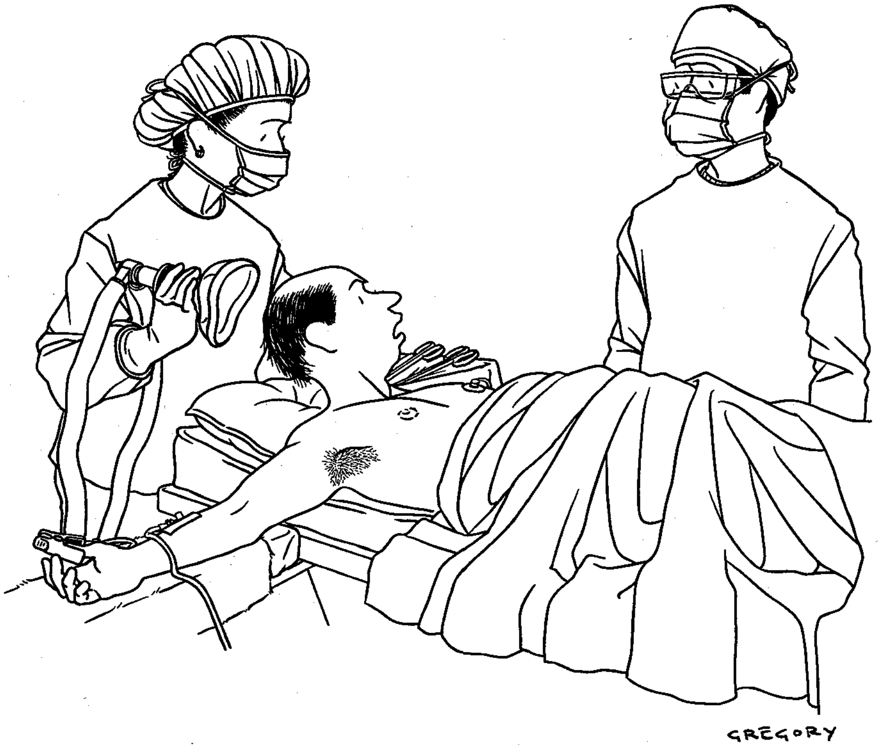
autumn will come, and dusk, and when I am one hundred and one, my heart will hurt that when the streets were cold and dark that, entering the house, my mother did not take me in her arms."

Lou, "the business hound," as Odets called him, was no more biddable. Eradicating all hints of the Old World from his speech and his story, the go-getting Lou insisted that he was "born American." He changed his name from Gorodetsky—"city man," in Russian—and added a middle initial, inviting people to address him as L.J., which he felt was a more commanding, all-American moniker. L.J. began his career as a feeder in a print shop and soon rose to own a series of small businesses in Philadelphia and New York; he was also the author of a book called "How to Smooth the Selling Path." A disciple of "the theology of making a fast buck," as Odets put it in "Sweet Smell of Success," L.J. never felt the need to apologize for his rapacity. He wanted to be, he said, "a big man—number one." To his son, he was "a two-bit czar," a blowhard with "the insane belief that he must pass on (approve or modify) everything the other person is doing." "I had to fight him every inch of the way not to be swamped and engulfed, to stay alive," Odets wrote.

Even when Odets was an adult, L.J. continued to belittle him as "big boy." "My father [is] driving nails into my head," Odets wrote to a friend. Although he offered L.J. substantial financial assistance—between 1935 and 1950, he gave him more than a hundred thousand dollars—the harangues continued. Trying to persuade Odets to employ him as his manager in 1935, L.J. wrote, "Tell me young man, where have you gotten *all* the experience in the world, you think you have? I have seen men that was raised higher than you, and then seen them drop lower than that. . . . Yes, you are still the 'White Hope' but you are dropping." When, in 1937, L.J. learned that Odets had separated from Luise Rainer, the two-time Academy Award-winning actress, with whom he had a tempestuous three-year marriage, he sounded off in all his brutishness: "*I'm ashamed of you.* You are the dummist chunk of humanity I have ever come in contact with. . . . Your all ass backwards and sitting on your brains." Odets internalized this constant excoriation, berating himself in his journal as a "pig," a "pissant," an "idiot," a "loafer," and "twice an ass." He wrote, "It is the father you have *incorporated*, his characteristics and hated elements—*that* is the father to be afraid of!" L.J.'s toxic voice also found its way into some of Odets's most seductive stage villains—the gangsters Eddie Fuseli ("Golden Boy"), Kewpie ("Paradise Lost"), and Moe Axelrod ("Awake and Sing!"), the womanizer Mr. Prince ("Rocket to the Moon"), and the Hollywood mogul Marcus Hoff ("The Big Knife").

As a child, Odets sought refuge from his humiliation in dreams of public heroism. "All my boyhood and youth I thought of the word *nobility* and what it meant," he wrote. An autodidact who read twelve books a week, Odets was especially moved by Victor Hugo, whom he called "the mother of my literary heart." Hugo "inspired me, made me aspire," he noted. "I . . . longed to do heroic deeds with my bare hands, thirsted to be kind to people, particularly the weak and humble and oppressed. From Hugo I had my first feeling of social consciousness." Initially, and perhaps inevitably, as the child of histrionic parents, Odets gravitated to performing. He was, he recollected, "wild . . . to get my name in front of the public," "to get into people's love." Among his first jobs after school was to spin records on New York's WBNY, offering "custom-made commentary" and using the exposure to finagle the free theatre tickets that made him the city's "youngest critic," according to Winchell. At seventeen, Odets got his first professional acting job.

When Odets joined the Group Theatre, eight years later, in 1931, he saw it as a creative rebirth—"from the ashes the phoenix," he wrote. He had spent the intervening years as a journeyman actor in an American theatre that was still in its teething stages—poor scripts, poor training, poor conditions. "I live low . . . low low low, deep in the stink and slime," he wrote in "910 Eden Street" (1931), an early, autobiographical stab at playwriting. There were times when he existed, he said, on ten cents a day; he holed up in squalid, bug-infested hotels, surviving for months on a diet of shredded wheat and cans of herring. For the most part, his artistic ambitions far exceeded his opportunities. "It is a very horrible thing, having energies and no wagon to hitch them to," he wrote to a friend.



*"You know, doctor, right now I'd really prefer if your sense of humor were a tad less self-deprecating."*

The Group was that wagon. Founded by three theatrical idealists—Clurman, the director Lee Strasberg, and the producer Cheryl Crawford—the company was an attempt to redefine the nature of American theatre and to restore dignity to the acting profession. With its emphasis on Stanislavsky's Method and on the notion of a performing collective, it answered Odets's artistic desire to merge with something larger than himself. ("I have begun to eat the flesh and blood of the Group," he wrote in the daybook of the Group's first summer program. "I am passionate about this thing!!!") The Group's embrace of Odets, however, was tentative. "No one thought much of him as an actor except Clifford himself," Kazan wrote in his memoir, "Elia Kazan: A Life." Certainly, Clurman and Strasberg were not overwhelmed. But, finally, Clurman played his hunch. "Let's have him," he said. "Something is cooking with that man. I don't know if it's potato pancakes or what, but what's cooking has a rich odor."

Odets was hired at thirty-five dollars a week, but, much to his increasing resentment, he never got a good part: in his first four years with the Group, he played a tenant farmer with one line and a bum on a park bench with his back to the audience, and was an understudy. Though he was initially thrilled at the prospect of being directed by Lee Strasberg, he soon discovered that "those actors who had the good parts got the real and best benefits of Strasberg's training, and the others did not." "You felt like a little kid with its nose pressed against the window saying, 'I wish I could get in so I could get some more of those "geegaws" off the Christmas tree,' " he told the theatre professor Arthur Wagner. (Out of that resentment came Odets's subsequent practice of writing for an ensemble; in all his early plays, instead of one or two starring roles, there are seven or eight characters of equal importance.)

By his own admission, however, without the Group Theatre Odets would not have become a playwright. His work as an actor encouraged a confidence in his own internal resources. "The so-called 'Method' forced you to face yourself and really function out of the kind of person you are," he said. It also taught him fearlessness and emotional honesty. In 1931, he began to experiment with plays. He wrote a piece about life in Philadelphia and another about a musical genius of the Beethoven variety. He asked for feedback from others in the Group, especially Clurman, who was then Odets's "favorite character outside of fiction." Clurman wrote of the music play, "It showed no trace of talent. I suggested instead that he write about the people he had met and observed the past few years." The suggestion took. "I am sure of it now, know the definite feeling of what to do and how," Odets wrote, at the age of twenty-six, as he began work on the play that would become "Awake and Sing!" "I am filled with materials."

On January 5, 1935, within two minutes of the lights going up on "Waiting for Lefty," at the Civic Repertory Theatre, on Fourteenth Street, the audience began to clap. "Line after line brought applause, whistles, bravos, and heartfelt shouts of kinship," Clurman wrote. Odets and Kazan, who were part of the cast, were sitting together as plants in the audience. "You saw for the first time theatre as a cultural force," Odets recalled. "There was such an at-oneness with audience and actors that the actors didn't know whether they were acting and the audience didn't know whether they were sitting and watching it, or had changed positions." He continued, "I found myself up on my feet shouting 'Bravo!' . . . I forgot I wrote the play, forgot I was in the play. . . . The proscenium arch disappeared." Kazan—who later directed the premières of "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "Death of a Salesman"—said, "It was the most overwhelming reception I've ever heard in the theatre."

"Waiting for Lefty," which Odets wrote in three days, crosscut a union meeting with scenes of the aftermath of the Depression, which had left more than one in four workers unemployed. Odets saw life through a Marxist lens, but his play wasn't ideological. With its notes of hurt and hope, "Lefty" depicted effectively onstage, for the first time, the brokenhearted world that Odets knew so well, where, as he said, "there is only shame and regret, resignation and anxiety." Agate, one of the union organizers, tells the workers:

> Well, maybe I don't know a thing; maybe I fell outa the cradle when I was a kid and ain't been right since. . . . Maybe I got a *glass eye*, but it come from working in a factory at the age of eleven. They hooked it out because they didn't have a shield on the works. But I wear it like a medal 'cause it tells the world where I belong—deep down in the working class! . . . This is your life and mine! It's skull and bones every incha the road! Christ, we're dyin' by inches! For what? For the debutant-ees to have their sweet comin' out parties in the Ritz! Poppa's got a daughter she's gotta get her picture in the papers. Christ, they make 'em with our blood. . . . Slow death or fight. It's war!

"Waiting for Lefty" became, as Odets said later, "a kind of light machine gun that you wheeled in to use whenever there was any kind of strike trouble." At the end of the première, there were twenty-eight curtain calls, and for twenty minutes afterward the dazed audience did not leave the theatre; some climbed onto the stage, waiting for the actors to come back out. It was "the birth cry of the thirties," Clurman said. "Our youth had found its voice." Kazan wrote, "None of us was ever to be the same again, and I suppose we all knew it. But we had no idea how far and how fast this change would go. Cliff was to become a god."

"When I mention the word 'American,' it is myself I mean," Odets said, echoing Walt Whitman, after whom he named his son. Like Whitman, Odets, according to Clurman, felt a "blood-tie with the average guy in the street," but, whereas Whitman sang the body electric, Odets sang the body politic. His internal landscape—"the homeless thing"—exactly paralleled the nation's sense of dispossession. And, in his dissection of the American disease, he brought onto the stage a whole range of hitherto undramatized souls. "Waiting for Lefty" made literary material of union goons. "Awake and Sing!" was one of the first sightings on the Broadway stage of the Jewish-American family. "How interesting we all were, how vivid and strong on the beat of that style," Alfred Kazin wrote of the play. "The words, always real but never flat, brilliantly authentic like no other theatre speech on Broadway, aroused the audience to such delight that one could feel it bounding back and uniting itself with the mind of the writer."

Idiomatic speech was the key to the tempo of Odets's plays, which expanded the boundaries of stage naturalism. As an understudy to the lead in John Howard Lawson's "Success Story," Odets had learned the poetic power of the colloquial. "It showed me the poetry that was inherent in the chaff of the street," he told Wagner. "There was something quite elevated . . . in the way people spoke." Odets believed that "new art work should shoot bullets." His wisecracks reached across the footlights with a wallop that no previous American writing for the stage had achieved: "I'm in you like a tapeworm"; "I'm versus you! Completely versus!"; "Diphtheria gets more respect than me!"; "Cut your throat, sweetheart. Save time." At once comic and trenchant, his big-city idiom exposed the brutal adaptations of personality to brutal times; epigrammatic tough talk rippled through the plays and created an unsettling lyrical undertow. "Here without a dollar you don't look the world in the eye," the matriarch Bessie says in "Awake and Sing!" "Talk from now to next year—this is life in America."

Odets thought of his plays as songs. "Perhaps I am the only one . . . who realizes how closely my talent is related to that of songwriters," he said in his 1940 diary. "We start together from a core of lyric. Each of my plays . . . I could call a song cycle on a given theme." Odets brought his passion for music to the construction of dialogue as well; his instinct, according to the film director Alexander Mackendrick, with whom he collaborated on "Sweet Smell of Success," seemed to be "always to devise patterns of three, four, or five interacting characters." In the swiftness of the ricocheting lines, Odets created a thematic and harmonic density. The first few notes of distinctive complaint in "Awake and Sing!,"

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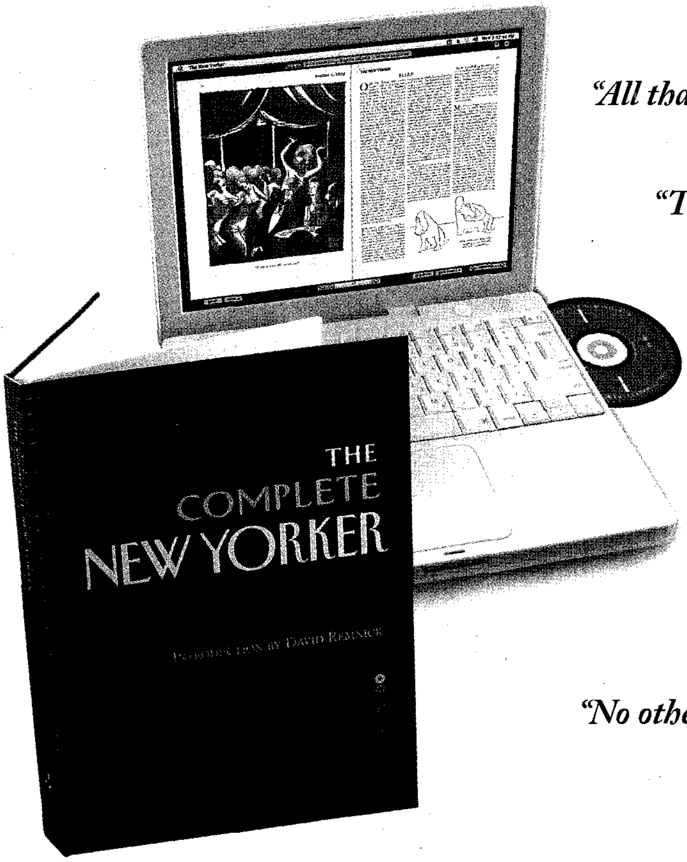

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for instance, conjure up the stalled life of the Berger household:

> RALPH: Where's advancement down the place? Work like crazy! Think they see it? You'd drop dead first.
>
> MYRON: Never mind, son, merit never goes unrewarded. Teddy Roosevelt used to say—
>
> HENNIE: It rewarded you—thirty years a haberdashery clerk!
>
> *(Jacob laughs)*
>
> RALPH: All I want's a chance to get to first base.
>
> HENNIE: That's all?

"All I wanted was two clean rooms to live in, a phonograph, some records," Odets said. In fact, he got a lot more than he bargained for. His meteoric emergence from the lower ranks marked a shift of power within the struggling Group Theatre. In 1934, Odets and the other actors began to take control of the Group's artistic management. Odets and Strasberg were, Odets recalled, "always on the outs." Strasberg had privately dismissed "Waiting for Lefty," which had been rehearsed without him; discussing "Awake and Sing!" in front of the company, he had humiliated Odets. ("You don't seem to understand, Clifford. We don't *like* your play," he said.) Odets's rise signalled Strasberg's decline. "We decided that Lee inhibited the actors and we should be wary of his influence," Kazan recalled. "I think it cost him his creative life," Odets said. "Because he never recovered." Within a year, Odets had four plays on Broadway.

"An Odets play was awaited like news hot off the presses, as though through him we would know what to think of ourselves," Arthur Miller wrote in his memoir "Timebends." "In Marxism was magic, and Odets had the wand." Odets himself felt the magic. "Now not only was I a man with a ten-million-dollar arm but I could really direct the ball now just where it wanted to go," he said. He was both inspired and lumbered by this new responsibility. He was the Group's cash cow, and, it seemed to him, he had to provide a calf every season. "I dropped this calf and some people would rush up and grab it, wipe it off and take it away and I would be left there bellowing," he said. "I would let them do it but with a great deal of resentment. They had to have those veal chops on the table."

Walking into the show-biz hangout Lindy's one day, in 1940, Odets was stopped by the actor Lionel Stander. "You are a first-class man," Stander said. "What are you doing with these nitwits?" It was a question that haunted Odets, who by then had grabbed fame's live wire and couldn't let go. He travelled back and forth between New York and Hollywood; he was a habitué of café society; he was living in a Village penthouse; he had a Cadillac and was building a treasure trove of modern art. At the same time, he needed calm and isolation in order to write. "I was not the same young man I used to be but trying to hold on to him," he said. The monk and the winking courtier were perpetually at war inside him. Odets saw his voluptuary itch as a legacy from his mother. "When the child needs consolation . . . and the mother will not give it," he wrote, "the child will later . . . move towards a series of consolations. . . . Sex, self-sex, distractions, arts, gourmandizing, . . . rich clothes, etc." And it was his need both to win his father's approval and to triumph over him that kept Odets forever in thrall to Hollywood's big bucks—money being L.J.'s only measure of achievement. "I want to be a poor poet and a powerful businessman, a sensational young man and a modest artist with a secret life," Odets wrote in 1940. "There are contradictory pulls—one to live with tightened discipline, sharp, hard and cold; the other to go hotly and passionately to hell as fast and as fully as possible."

His plays charted his struggle for equilibrium, "the aching balance," as he called it. The heroes of "Golden Boy" and "The Big Knife" are both torn between commercial success and artistic fulfillment, driven crazy by their decision to live against their natures; both murder themselves out of nostalgia for their lost integrity. Unlike his characters, however, Odets killed himself not sensationally but by degrees. "I see so plainly what you are trying to do!" he wrote to himself with weird prescience in his 1940 journal. "You will never conquer the MORAL MAN within you! You are trying to kill him, but he will not permit it; he will murder you with regret and anguish first." Still, in his unflinching struggle between heart and appetite, Odets saw honor and perhaps some kind of redemption. "Inner contradictions are not solved by throwing out half of the personality, but by keeping both sides tear-

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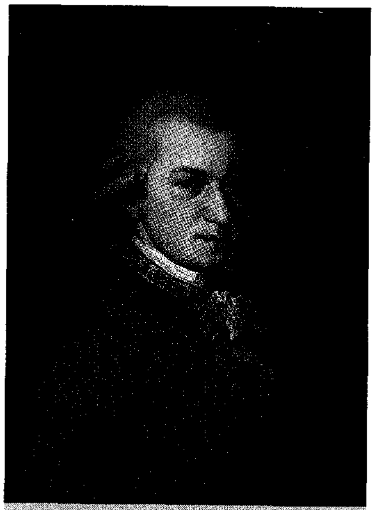

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ing and pulling . . . until an AMALGAM ON A HIGH LEVEL OF LIFE AND EXPERIENCE IS ACHIEVED," he wrote. "Wrestle, Bernie . . . you may win a blessing," the heroine of "The Country Girl" advises the would-be lover she rejects, in the play's last lines. "But stay unregenerate. Life knocks the sauciness out of us soon enough."

Hollywood and the House Un-American Activities Committee were a one-two punch to Odets's reputation. In the thirties, he used much of the proceeds of his lucrative screenplay work to support the Group Theatre. When, after the dissolution of the Group, in 1941, he continued to devote himself primarily to screenplays—among them "Humoresque," the first draft of "It's a Wonderful Life," and "None but the Lonely Heart," which he also directed—Odets was perceived as a sellout to the high art of the theatre. "But to what theatre was he supposed to remain faithful?" Miller asked. "There was nothing to return to, no theatre or theatre culture, only show business and some theatrical real estate."

In 1947, the committee listed Odets as one of seventy-nine members of the film community affiliated with the Communist Party. By the time he appeared before HUAC as a "friendly witness," in May, 1952, he had married and divorced his second wife, the actress Bette Grayson, and was the father of two children, Nora and Walt. According to Walt Odets, who is now a clinical psychologist in Berkeley, Nora had "serious developmental disabilities. She was going to psychologists, neurologists, endocrinologists her whole childhood. . . . My father was supporting all that." In other words, Odets could not afford to lose his Hollywood income. (In 1954, when Grayson died suddenly, of pneumonia, Odets became a single parent and those paydays became even more important.) According to Victor Navasky, who wrote a history of the era, Odets both "read the Committee the riot act and, in the vocabulary of the day, 'named names.'" His testimony cost him friends and, according to some, his talent. "He was never the same after he testified," Kazan wrote. "He was no longer the hero-rebel, the fearless prophet of a new world. It choked off the voice he'd had."

This point, however, is debatable: Odets wrote both "Sweet Smell of Success" and "The Flowering Peach" after his testimony; the former is one of the era's classic films, and the latter, produced on Broadway in 1954, was originally selected by the judges of the Pulitzer Prize, only to be overruled by the Pulitzer committee, which instead gave the award to "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." Odets didn't lose his talent; he lost the attention of his audience. His "ringing tone" was pitch-perfect for the floundering nation in the mid-thirties, but as early as "Night Music," which was written in 1939, when the country was mobilizing for war, his bursts of passion had begun to sound forced, even to him. "Your fight is here, not across the water," a police detective says to an aspiring soldier in the play. "You love this girl? And you mean it? Then fight for love! You want a home? Do you?—then fight for homes!"

Different times required a different way of speaking. The postwar boom brought abundance to the Republic, and a shift in the cultural ethos, from self-sacrifice to self-aggrandizement. The nation had calmed down and turned inward; so had Odets's idiom, which turned from sociology to psychology. Sometimes judged "dated," because of their schematic construction, Odets's later plays, with their study of bad faith, bear witness to a certain kind of American emptiness that is evergreen. "Half-idealism is the peritonitis of the soul," he wrote in "The Big Knife"; it was an epitaph both for his own self-deception and for what he called "the strange dry country" around him, which had fought a war for freedom abroad only to begin a witch hunt at home.

After the commercial failure of "The Flowering Peach"—he netted only four thousand dollars for two years of work—Odets settled his motherless ménage in Beverly Hills, where he remained until his death, in a series of cluttered rented dwellings. In these chaotic accommodations, according to his son, Odets could usually be found lying on the sofa "in a terry-cloth bathrobe, listening to Beethoven and smoking cigarettes." He was an affectionate but erratic father. "He was like a furious machine," Walt told me. "He lived in a kind of intensity that was constant and relentless." Nora continued to absorb much of Odets's time and energy. As a rebellious teen-ager, Walt asked to be sent away to boarding school, but Odets refused, saying, "I can't let you go away and leave me alone with Nora." "*That* I couldn't forgive him for," Walt said.

In the five years before he decamped for California, Odets wrote seven plays; in the twenty-two years he lived after the demise of the Group Theatre, he wrote three. "I am seething and swollen, lumpy, disordered and baffled, as if I were a woman fifteen months pregnant and unable to sleep or turn, crying aloud, 'Oh, God, out, out, out!' " he wrote to Brenman-Gibson in the early sixties, by which time even the film work was drying up. To make ends meet, he had to sell some of the paintings off his walls. Odets, who had always been adrift, now was just swamped. "Hapless and helpless," he wrote. "The Jewish prophet is being eaten alive by the Jewish father in me, and if somewhere it doesn't stop soon, I shall be indeed dead."

On the cheap maple kitchen table where he wrote, Odets, at the time of his death, had placed two *Time* articles, both with photographs showing him at his typewriter: one was a 1938 story with the renegade battle cry "Down with the general Fraud!" as a caption; the other was a 1962 clipping headlined "Credo of a Wrong-Living Man," snidely reporting the news of Odets's appointment as a script supervisor and writer for the NBC TV series "The Richard Boone Show." "I may well be not only the foremost playwright manqué of our time but of all time," Odets wrote in 1961. "I do not believe a dozen playwrights in history had my natural endowment."

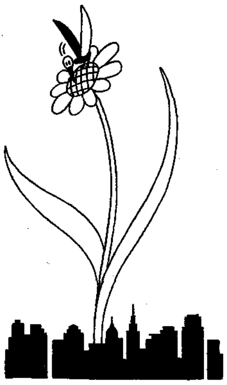
It's possible that Odets's narrative of decline is what has kept him from claiming the privileged place in the theatrical discussion that he deserves. Odets's plays showed a way for the next generation of playwrights to combine linear movement with psychological complexity and depth. He brought a new demotic music to stage speech. His subject was always the struggle of the heartbroken American soul under capitalism. "I will reveal America to itself by revealing myself to myself," Odets wrote. His plays and his life, full of unique lament and liveliness, eloquently fulfill his prophecy. ♦

# BRIEFLY NOTED

### *Poetry*

Averno, *by Louise Glück (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22).* Few poets can shoulder the weight of myth the way Glück does. Here, in eighteen linked poems, she rewrites the legend of Persephone, offering the girl respite from centuries of being "pawed over by scholars." For Glück, the myth is, ultimately, "an argument between the mother and the lover— / the daughter is just meat." Glück's language, grave and precise, gives Persephone an elegant home in which to grow up. "The girl who disappears from the pool / will never return. A woman will return." Never overwrought, the poems brilliantly display a poet's insight, a mother's warmth, and a mortal's empathy. There is wry humor, too (Hades debates naming Persephone's Hell "The New Hell"), and, amid much that is dark, there are fragments of hope. In "October" we meet a young girl, scared on the subway: "*you are not alone,* / the poem said, / in the dark tunnel."

Hoops, *by Major Jackson (Norton; $23.95).* The slangy title of Jackson's second collection is a layered metaphor, implying, among other things, basketball, jewelry, and life's hurdles. Jackson seems to define himself by his eclecticism; he reveres basketball players as much as poets. Recalling his early life in a rough Philadelphia neighborhood, he draws nourishment from a sense of his acuity: "My breathing / was older than me." His poems are witty, musical, and intelligent; he is equally happy discussing the war on terror—"An empire croons, toughed-up in a trance"—or describing early crushes: "The swagger / behind their blue-tinted sunglasses and low-rider / jeans hurt boys like me." Other subjects include Columbine, Tupac Shakur, iPods, and, above all, the condition and future of the black poet. In a final flourish of contrast, Jackson writes an epistolary poem to Gwendolyn Brooks, in a recognizable, albeit flexible, rhyme royal.



The Theater of Night, *by Alberto Ríos (Copper Canyon; $20).* In this rhapsodic series of poems, Ríos presents the story of Ventura and Clemente Ríos, a married couple living near the United States-Mexico border in the first half of the twentieth century. Ríos's project, indebted to magic realism but rooted in naturalism, proves ambitious. He deftly uses the couple—members, he says, of his "extended family"—to explore liminal spaces: they live in a border town surrounded by "invisible" walls ("Walk beyond the wall and you walk / On the ground of the other world"), a place where the divide between body and soul, and body and body, narrows: "He stood slightly inside her / As if the lines of their bodies / blurred briefly." When Ventura dies, the aged Clemente cries to her, "I want to be the high sheriff / Of the space between us."

Anna of All the Russias, *by Elaine Feinstein (Knopf; $27.50).* Anna Akhmatova was born in 1889 near the Black Sea, the moody, headstrong daughter of a naval engineer. Her childhood was marked by the death of a younger sister and by her parents' disastrous marriage, which perhaps influenced her own complicated love life. Feinstein's book draws heavily on previous accounts and, in packed, breathless prose, examines the poet's every journey and peccadillo, first against the glittering background of pre-revolutionary Russia, then in the depths of the years under Stalin, when she became the voice of a people's suffering. Akhmatova emerges in glimpses—reciting Verlaine under a black umbrella with Modigliani, who sketched her nude; arriving, poverty-stricken, at the Mandelstams' flat in 1934, with a broken suitcase; drinking tea with a young Joseph Brodsky in the early nineteen-sixties—but Feinstein never really succeeds in capturing the personality that remains so immediate in the poems.

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## BOOKS

# JESUS LAUGHED

*In "The Gospel of Judas," the renegade is redeemed.*

### BY ADAM GOPNIK

The great wheel of history always turns, if slowly, and so, at last, the ultimate betrayer, Judas Iscariot himself, comes around again for another inspection, a potential record-clearing moment occasioned by the publication of "The Gospel of Judas" (National Geographic; $22), a very ancient, though not actually contemporary, rendering of Jesus, as seen by the man who ratted him out. Written in Coptic, and found, three decades ago, within a papyrus codex that contains other non-canonic writing, the manuscript has known a bizarre Calvary of its own—including a papyrus-damaging sixteen-year residence in a safe-deposit box in Hicksville, New York—and has only now been edited and translated into English by an international group of scholars, each of whom has provided his own commentary. The event feels uncomfortably hyped; there is an accompanying book, "The Lost Gospel: The Quest for the Gospel of Judas Iscariot" (National Geographic; $27), by Herbert Krosney, devoted to the tale of the Gospel's rediscovery and sale, an all too human story suggesting, once again, that Mammon's servant problem is more easily solved than that other master's. Still, it is a genuine occasion, offering much to think about for believer and doubter alike.

Known to exist since the second century, this "Gospel of Judas" is, in one way, simply another of the Gnostic Gospels, like those found at Nag Hammadi, in Egypt, sixty years ago: unorthodox Christian documents, written by, or at least circulated within, communities of eccentric faith that flourished in the first and second centuries. These Gospels play with a series of variations on Christian belief: the irredeemable corruption of the world we live in, the hidden truth that the Old Testament God who created it was an ignorant or malevolent demiurge, and Jesus' essence as a being of pure spirit, an emissary from another and higher realm. What makes this second-century Gnostic Gospel different is, perhaps, the extreme aggression of its heresy; it represents "Christianity turned on its head," in the words of one commentator, the religious historian Bart D. Ehrman, by making the villain in the story the hero. Its editors think that its significance is enormous ("one of the greatest discoveries of the century"), and right out of Dan Brown; the Krosney book quotes an American scholar saying that "it could create a crisis of faith."

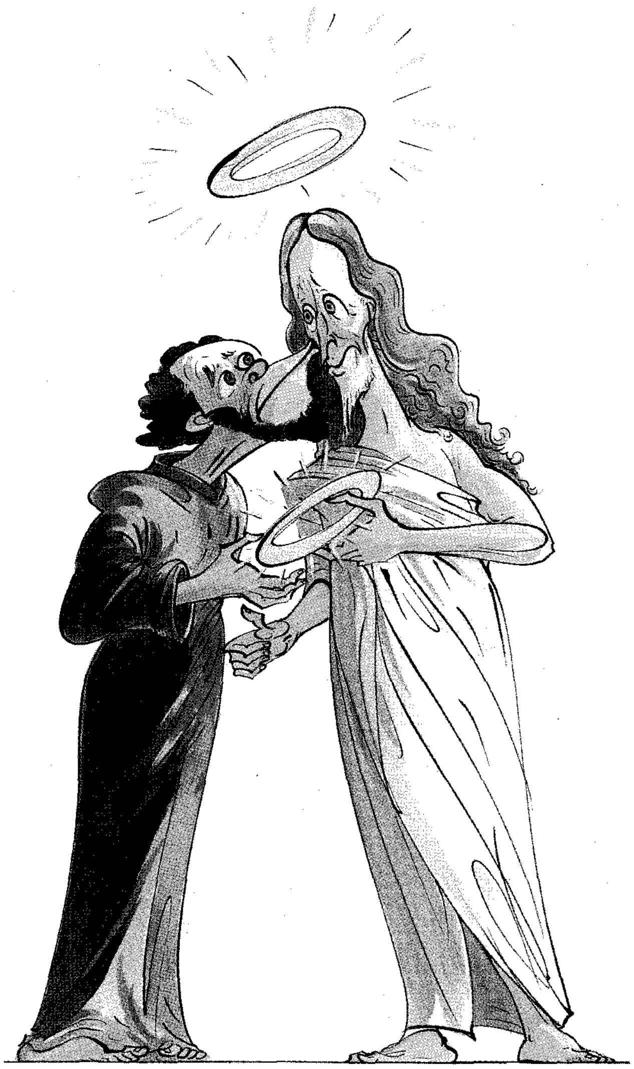
It certainly makes for odd bedside reading. "The Gospel of Judas" isn't actually a gospel by Judas, or, really, a gospel at all in the sense that we might expect: an account of the life of Jesus, from birth to death and rebirth. It is, instead, a mystical riff on a life already assumed to be familiar. It begins just before Jesus' last Passover in Jerusalem, as the disciples are offering a prayer to God over the dinner table. Watching them, Jesus laughs. "Why are you laughing at us?" the nettled disciples ask, and Jesus says that he is laughing not at them but at their strange idea of pleasing their God. (One of the unnerving things about the new Gospel is that Jesus, who never laughs in the canonic Gospels, is constantly laughing in this one, and it's obviously one of those sardonic, significant, how-little-you-know laughs, like the laugh of the ruler of a dubious planet on "Star Trek.")

The disciples are furious at Jesus' condescension, except for Judas, who thinks he knows what the laughter signifies. "I know who you are and where you have come from," Judas says, standing before him. "You are from the immortal realm of Barbelo." Apparently startled by his insight, Jesus tells Judas, "Step away from the others and I shall tell you the mysteries of the Kingdom."

The true mystery, as Jesus unveils it, is that, out beyond the stars, there exists a divine, blessed realm, free of the materiality of this earthly one. This is the realm of Barbelo, a name that gnostics gave the celestial Mother, who lives there with, among others, her progeny, a good God awkwardly called the Self-Generated One. Jesus, it turns out, is not the son of the Old Testament God, whose retinue includes a rebellious creator known as Yaldabaoth, but an avatar of Adam's third son, Seth. His mission is to show those lucky members of mankind who still have a "Sethian" spark the way back to the blessed realm. Jesus, we learn, was laughing at the disciples' prayer because it was directed at their God, the Old Testament God, who is really no friend of mankind but, rather, the cause of its suffering.

What gives "The Gospel of Judas" a peculiar pathos is the sacrificial role that Judas must play in the divine story. Jesus is going back to Barbelo, and to get there he must "sacrifice the man that clothes me"; that is, his mortal body. The only way to do this is to accept his own death, and he urges Judas to become the agent of it. (Presumably, self-slaughter would not get him back.) But Judas has reason to worry that if he obeys his Lord he will be stuck with a bad reputation forever. "In a vision," he says, "I saw myself as the twelve disciples were stoning me." Jesus assures him that though "you will be cursed by the other generations . . . you will come to rule over them." At the end, he supplies Judas with a beatific vision of a luminous cloud, and, in this Gospel's one truly poetic note, tells him, "Lift up your eyes and look at the cloud and the light within it and the stars surrounding it. The star that leads the way is your star." Judas accepts the bargain—temporal libel in exchange for eternal luminosity—and agrees to turn Jesus over to the high priests. The Gospel's very last lines have an extraordinarily modern feeling of Hemingwayesque understatement, achieved perhaps inadvertently, by textual omission: "They approached Judas and said to him, 'What are you doing here? You are Jesus' disciple.' Judas answered them as they wished. And he received some money and handed him over to them."

The conundrums that produced this Gospel are long familiar: if Christ is a full member of the Godhead and divine, how could he possibly be "betrayed," and since his death is, anyway, the pivot point of human redemption, how could he be peeved at Judas, the agent who brought it about? In "The Gospel of Judas," all problems are solved by making the Christ a pure spirit, and the Crucifixion his necessary, and presumably painless, crossing over. (The situation, really, is very like that at the end of "The Little Prince," where the snake, like Judas, has to be persuaded to bite the celestial visitor in order to send him back, once again, to his star. And the last image of that book, too, is the single lonely personal star.)



In the new Gospel, Judas was really doing Christ a favor.

GERALD SCARFE

Obviously, "The Gospel of Judas" appears at a time of a new fashion, not to say rage, for "alternate" Gospels and revisionist retellings of the Jesus story. These are not the egalitarian, feminist versions of the story that were among the first fruits of the Nag Hammadi discovery. Instead, the new obsession is to introduce, or reintroduce, into Christianity something hidden, strange, and cultic—to reveal a deliberately suppressed story. And yet an odd double rhythm is at work. By making the Gospel story more occult, one also drains it of its cosmic significance; making it more mysterious makes it less mystical. (If Dan Brown or the authors of "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" are right—and they aren't—then Jesus is reduced from the Cosmic Overlord to the founder of a minor line of Merovingian despots.) "The Gospel of Judas" turns Christianity into a mystery cult—Jesus at one point describes to Judas the highly bureaucratic organization of the immortal realm, enumerating hundreds of luminaries—but robs it of its ethical content. Jesus' message in the new Gospel is entirely supernatural. You don't have to love thy neighbor; just seek your star. The Gospel of Judas is, in this way, the dead opposite of the now much talked of Gospel of Jefferson, the edition prepared by the third President, in which all the miracles and magic stuff are deleted, and what is left is the ethical teaching.

Orthodox Christians will point out, correctly, that there is no new "challenge" to the Church in the Judas Gospel, much less a crisis of faith. This is an ancient heresy, dealt with firmly, not to say brutally, throughout Church history. The finding of the new Gospel, though obviously remarkable as a bit of textual history, no more challenges the basis of the Church's faith than the discovery of a document from the nineteenth century written in Ohio and defending King George would be a challenge to the basis of American democracy. There are no new beliefs, no new arguments, and certainly no new evidence in the papyrus that would cause anyone to doubt who did not doubt before.

Yet the Judas Gospel is an eye-opener anyway. First, because it is useful to be reminded, in a time of renewed fundamentalism, that religions actually have no fundament: that the inerrant texts and unchallenged holies of any faith are the work of men and time. Any orthodoxy is the snapshot of a moment. That the Church has long had answers to gnosticism, in all its varieties, does not mean that gnosticism was always doomed to heresy. Bart D. Ehrman has recently written, touchingly and convincingly, of his own migration away from a fundamentalist Christianity on the basis of an increasing understanding of how time-contingent and man-made the foundational Gospels really are. As Borges once suggested, had Alexandria, where gnosticism flourished, triumphed rather than Rome, we would have had a Dante making poetry out of the realm of Barbelo.

And then the new Gospel casts a spell—for sympathetic freethinkers, especially—because it reminds us of the literary strength of the canonic Gospels, exactly for their marriage of the celestial and the commonplace. We want a bit of Hicksville and a bit of Heaven in our sacred texts, matter and man and magic together. Simply as editors, the early Church fathers did a fine job of leaving the strong stories in and the weird ones out. The orthodox canon gives us a Christ who is convincing as a character in a way that this Gnostic one is not: angry and impatient and ethically engaged, easily exasperated at the limitations and nagging of his dim disciples and dimmer family relations, brilliantly concrete in his parables and human in his pain. Whether one agrees with Jefferson that this man lived, taught, and died, or with St. Paul that he lived and died and was born again, it is hard not to prefer him to the Jesus of the new Gospel, with his stage laughter and significant winks and coded messages. Making Judas more human makes Jesus oddly less so, less a man with a divine and horrible burden than one more know-it-all with a nimbus. As metaphor or truth, we're sticking with the old story. Give us that old-time religion—but, to borrow a phrase from St. Augustine, maybe not quite yet. ◆

## BOOKS

# THIRTEEN WAYS

*A portrait of adolescence from the puzzle master of British fiction.*

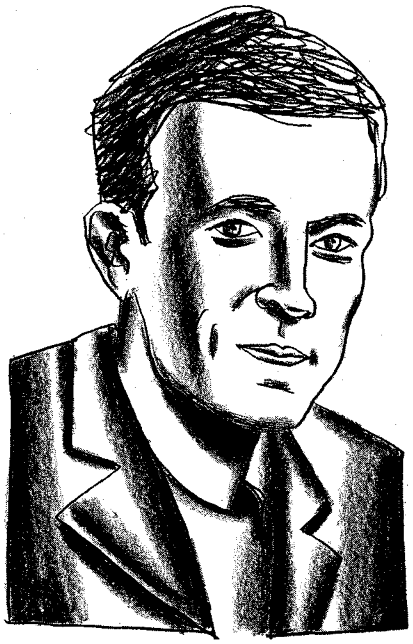
### BY DANIEL ZALEWSKI

For some writers, the end of a chapter is little more than a pause for breath. For the audacious British novelist David Mitchell, the chapter is the organizing principle of his imagination. His first three works—"Ghostwritten" (1999), "Number9Dream" (2001), and "Cloud Atlas" (2004)—are divided, with almost fetishistic care, into sections that resemble the movements of a musical composition. The sections are presented as independent narratives, divergent in theme and tone, which are carefully tethered to a larger design.

The Mitchell method reached a height of virtuosity in the entertainingly kinetic "Cloud Atlas," in which six archly distinct narratives—each set in its own place and era, and each mimicking a different genre, from the nautical adventure to the conspiracy thriller—are spliced together, as if by a twitchy film editor. Five of the stories cut off, at a moment of high drama, like an old projector snapping the celluloid right in the middle of the big shoot-out; they resume, with equal abruptness, in the book's second half. As the novel progresses, strange connections emerge: the text of the first chapter is discovered on a bookshelf in the second; the hero of the third section hears a bewitching recording of chamber music, the "Cloud Atlas Sextet," which was composed by the protagonist of the second. Mitchell's early books are elaborate games—Calvino-style curios, swollen to five hundred pages—and they are written in playful pastiche, with sly imitations of writers as various as Daniel Defoe, Haruki Murakami, and Philip K. Dick.

In the wake of such ostentatious artifice, Mitchell's new novel, "Black Swan Green" (Random House; $23.95), seems startlingly unmannered. It's a modest, sweet portrait of a thirteen-year-old boy, growing up in Worcestershire in 1982, who is afflicted with a stammer, unhappy parents, and a snide older sister. Mitchell hasn't abandoned his fascination with the chapter: his meditation on being thirteen has thirteen sections, each featuring a self-contained story. This time, however, his approach has the subtlety of a watermark.

Even Mitchell's admirers may find "Black Swan Green" a welcome act of simplification. His previous novels have won him acclaim in Britain—he has twice been a finalist for the Booker Prize—but the characters were often lost amid the multilevel structures. By settling into a single narrative voice, and skipping the pyrotechnics, Mitchell has come by something that eluded him before: a sense of earned emotion.



*David Mitchell*

Jason Taylor, the book's narrator, is humiliated by his speech impediment—it "makes me shrivel up like a plastic wrapper in a fire," he says—and he often retreats into near-silence. Black Swan Green, where he lives, is a typically claustrophobic hamlet, and Jason works hard to render himself invisible, deflecting his teachers' glances and taking lonely walks to avoid his peers. His retreat to the sidelines has, at the same time, sharpened his abilities of observation. Watching two schoolmates fighting, he notes, "My own body flinched under the punches automatically, like how your leg hoists itself when you're watching a high jumper on TV."

Jason analyzes his verbal debility compulsively. When people with a stammer falter, he explains, "they go trembly-red like an evenly matched arm wrestler, and their mouth guppergupperguppers like a fish in a net. It must be quite a funny sight." He envisions the stammer as a hulking monster, Hangman, whose "snaky fingers . . . sink inside my tongue and squeeze my windpipe so nothing'll work," and he catalogues the myriad ways his defect shames him: "If I stammer with Dad, he gets that face he had when he got his Black & Decker Workmate home and found it was missing a crucial packet of screws. Hangman just *loves* that face." Jason's voice-over is fluid and self-deprecating, but, when he actually speaks, his words are often self-conscious or strangled. "I can feel the stuff I don't say rotting inside me like mildewy spuds in a sack," he says. Jason feels freakish, misunderstood, and singularly miserable: "My billion problems kept bobbing up like corpses in a flooded city." He feels, that is, the way most thirteen-year-olds do, and his stammer becomes a surprisingly resonant metaphor for the stoppered frustrations of teen-agers everywhere. (It's certainly subtler than turning your troubled adolescent into, say, Spider-Man.)

The narrator of "Black Swan Green" is sharper than most kids his age, but he isn't absurdly so. Ever since Salinger created the precocious Glass clan, the teenager in modern fiction has too often displayed an omnivorous intellect and a suspiciously honed wit. (Jason is practically a dullard compared with the polymathic tot in Jonathan Safran Foer's recent "Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.") Early in the novel, Jason reveals an abominable secret: he furtively composes poetry on his bedroom typewriter. "If I ever admitted that out loud I'd get BUMHOLE PLUMMER scrawled on my locker," he explains. Yet, when Jason tries to conjure the English countryside in high verse, Mitchell makes sure that the results have the florid touch of the talented novice: "Petaled stars and dandelion comets streak the green universe";

JACQUES DE LOUSTAL

"Wormcasts pitted the bubbling lawn like squeezed blackheads." Similarly, Jason's displays of writerly wisdom are clever but hardly brain-rewiring: "Eavesdropping's sort of thrilling 'cause you learn what people really think, but eavesdropping makes you miserable for exactly the same reason."

Just as Jason's mind is engaging but ordinary, "Black Swan Green" remains snugly within familiar thematic territory: Mitchell's protagonist has his first romantic stirrings, becomes sadly aware of his father's limitations, and is shaken when a local youth is killed in the Falklands War. Jason's slang, and even his metaphors, belongs to the realm of small-town Britain. "The lake in the woods was *epic*," Jason raves, one wintry day. "Tiny bubbles were trapped in the ice like in Fox's Glacier Mints."

Part of what elevates the book from the mundane is its crisp, intelligent construction. The varied stories in "Black Swan Green" are set a month apart, and the bookends match: the first chapter, which takes place just before Jason's thirteenth birthday, is titled "January Man"; the last, set on the cusp of fourteen, bears the same title. Not to worry: Jason doesn't triumphantly come of age. In Mitchell's episodic portrait of adolescence, thirteen is something you stumble through. In one chapter, Jason tells of a moonlit stunt that has made him suddenly popular; a few months later, he recounts his equally swift descent to outcast status.

The episodic nature of "Black Swan Green" may call to mind another form: the television series, with its seasonal story arcs interspersed with stories-of-the-week. The sarcastic retorts of Jason's sister sound almost as if they had been scripted in Burbank, and one unfortunate story line, involving the broken watch of Jason's dead grandfather, has the tidy sentimentality of a Very Special Episode. Yet the show that "Black Swan Green" most closely evokes is the wonderful 1994 series "My So-Called Life," an unusually intimate portrait of another bright-but-not-too-bright kid. As that show demonstrated, the chopped-up format of television accommodates shifts in tone more forgivingly than the novel—from week to week, "My So-Called Life" veered deftly between comic plots and dramatic ones—and the medium is peculiarly suited to portrayals of adolescence, the time of life when you feel all over the place emotionally. In a similar way, the episodes of "Black Swan Green" effectively conjure the lurchy feeling of being thirteen.

Meanwhile, enthusiasts of Mitchell's puzzle-fictions have been quietly placated. Jason's father has an aggressive mistress, and her stalking presence is sneakily and repeatedly foreshadowed, in the manner of Clare Quilty, in "Lolita." And one lively story tells of Jason's brief friendship with the town eccentric—a Belgian dowager who welcomes his covert interest in music and literature. In "Cloud Atlas," the Belgian has a memorably toxic flirtation with the composer. (Jason, too, listens to a recording of the "Cloud Atlas Sextet," and his rapturous description of the music betrays Mitchell's lingering desire to push every button at once: "Jealous *and* sweet, this music was, sobbing *and* gorgeous, muddy *and* crystal.")

Mitchell's international renown—"Cloud Atlas" was a best-seller in Britain, and his books have been widely translated—hasn't yet extended to America. The British love him, paradoxically, because they sense an American novelist's ambition: he is determined to dazzle. Some of his American critics, though, grouse that he's a middlebrow neatnik: they object that his narratives always come together seamlessly, rather than dangle dismally, in proper postmodern fashion. This is a bit unfair: the idea that the modern world is too complex to cohere—and that, therefore, our novels shouldn't, either—long ago became a literary cliché. (Decades after Pynchon began producing works in which loose ends were ends unto themselves, wasn't it predictable that the baseball in DeLillo's "Underworld" would take a long roll to nowhere?) Given that Mitchell has a flair for narrative closure, it's understandable that he'd want to display it.

With "Black Swan Green," however, Mitchell seems to have learned to appreciate the eloquence of restraint. A sequence near the end of "Cloud Atlas" suggested that he was already beginning to question his baroque tendencies. In a moment of creative agitation, the composer ponders the value of his sextet, which, inevitably, has a structure mirroring that of Mitchell's novel. "Revolutionary or gimmicky?" the composer asks himself. "Shan't know until it's finished, and by then it'll be too late." ♦

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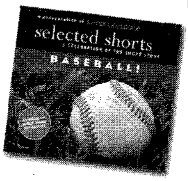
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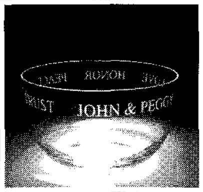
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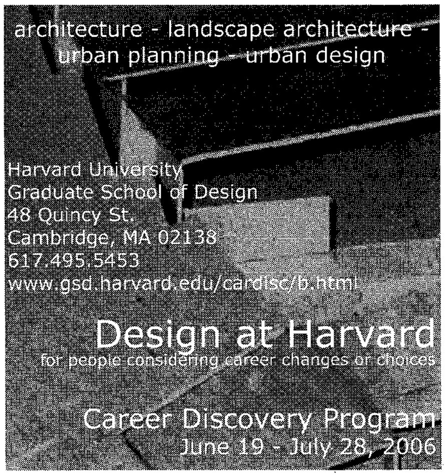
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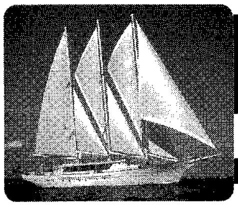
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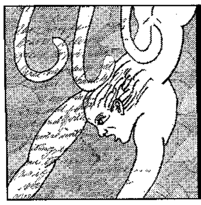
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## THE THEATRE

# MASQUERADE

*Sandra Bernhard and "Tryst."*

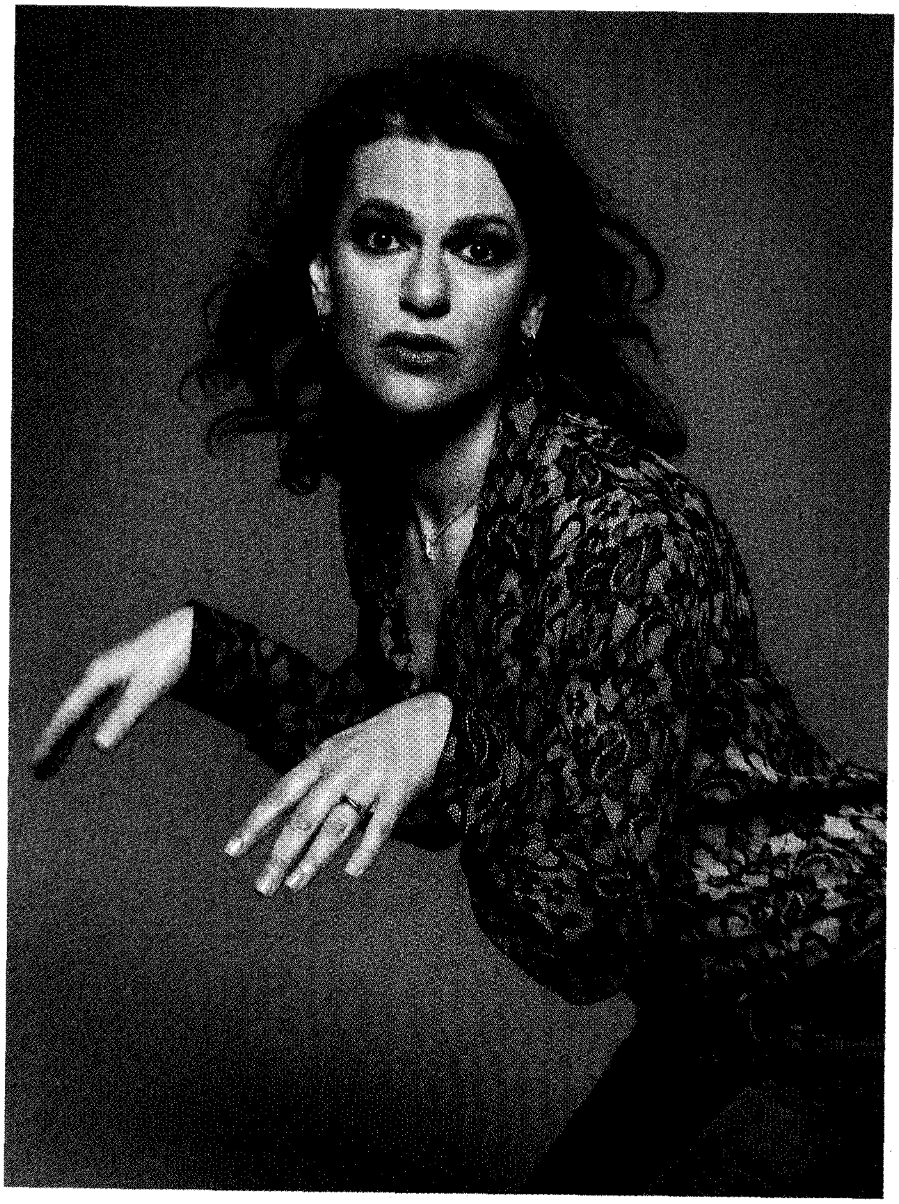
BY JOHN LAHR

Sandra Bernhard's latest exercise in ambivalence is called "Everything Bad & Beautiful" (at the Daryl Roth). As she stands before us, in a slinky patterned dress, with a coiffed cascade of copper hair, the first words out of her large trademark ruby lips are "Please don't look at me." Of course, like every tease, she means the opposite. Bernhard is a connoisseur of sour. She prides herself on her ability to draw poisoned water from the purest well. But her comic masquerade does little to hide the envy she feels for most of the things she mocks. As the title of the show suggests, Bernhard is presenting herself here as a renegade diva. Her first song—a full-throated version of "Beautiful," Christina Aguilera's hymn to the demoralized—reinforces her persona as a maverick outsider. But the lyrics also unwittingly broadcast the defensiveness behind Bernhard's imperialism: "I am beautiful/No matter what you say/Words can't bring me down/ I am beautiful in every single way/. . . So don't you bring me down today." Of the many requirements of the diva—requirements of ego, of command, of temperament—the first and most important is that she deliver the goods. This Bernhard can't do. She seems woefully confused about the difference between exhibitionism and performance.

Like her 1998 hit Broadway show "I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!," "Everything Bad & Beautiful" intersperses songs with the flimflammery of social commentary, personal history, fantasy, and kvetching. At one point, in a digression on theatregoing in New York, Bernhard wanders onto the subject of current Broadway shows. She feigns forgetfulness about Julia Roberts, an actress whom she claims looks so much like her that she could play her little sister. "Can't remember that girl," she says. "I had to think of Eric Roberts to remember her. She needs previews. I don't need previews. This is rock 'n' roll." Bernhard works hard at being insouciant. In comedy, however, there is a difference between being loose and being lazy. "I'm so fresh, so fierce," she tells herself in one aside; in fact, her soi-disant material is unfocussed and defanged. For all her rambling meshugaas, there is hardly a sustained idea or persuasive thought. Bernhard seems to have almost nothing to say—only the power to say it venomously. She sashays up to any number of subjects—the Cheneys, Condoleezza Rice, the President, Sharon Stone, Mariah Carey, Marianne Faithfull, Barbra Streisand—then refuses to engage them. Her jokes don't bite her subjects; they gum them. On Lynne Cheney, for instance: "How can she live with a man who has heart attacks behind his knees?" On the war in Iraq: "Support our troops? Of course I support them—bring them the fuck home!" Her best shot of the evening is a rant about Laura Bush's recent trip to Africa and the First Lady's suggestion that, as part of the fight against AIDS, Africans practice abstinence. "Are her daughters practicing abstinence?" Bernhard fumes, adding, "I don't care if they have herpes coming out of their pussies." Her legendary white heat flickers for a moment, then just as quickly dwindles to gray embers of disdain.

Since Bernhard's posture of knowingness lacks any traction of insight, the result is a noisy void. "L.A. is the intellectual hub of the nation," she says, smirking at California's shallowness and atrophy, only to embody them herself. Bernhard has a habit of referring to herself as Mama. "Mama is a committed Jew," she says. For our purposes, it'd be better if Mama were committed to her craft. At one point, she picks up her typed notes, which are propped on a music stand beside the microphone, and reads out a list of do give them a good time," he says, with a psychopath's lack of guilt. Love inhabits an entirely fictitious inner world, which turns all life into theatre and human beings into playthings. In his own realm, he conceives of himself as something of a star; he takes pride in his acting, his indubitable ability "to charm it up, act smitten," which turns all relationships into a game. Here, against the stark black cobblestones and flickering street lamps of London in 1910, Love encounters Adelaide Pinchin (the outstanding Amelia Campbell), a diminutive milliner who is frank about her homeliness. "I work in the back room doing the sewing," she says, adding of her professional cohorts, "We all got something wrong with us, that's why we're in the back room. Where the customers can't see us." Inevitably, Love is irresistible to the trusting and lonely Adelaide, whose opportunities are transparently limited. His blarney animates her life; his stage-managed attention bolsters her sense of herself.

"There's good in everyone, but you've got to look for it," Adelaide says. It's on her goodness that the perverse psychology of the story turns. As Campbell plays her, Adelaide has a clear-eyed, compelling decency, which gets under Love's shellac of savoir faire. He spends their wedding night playing cards with her and watching her fall asleep fully clothed on the bed. The next day, when Adelaide susses out the situation, the drama ratchets beyond the parameters of a standard Victorian love-thief tale. The con man's game is a performance of invulnerability, and Caulfield, with his strutting bravado, gets it just right. But, as Love's relationship with Adelaide shifts abruptly from scene to scene, we start to see where the invulnerability falters—and why. Even as he admires the generosity of Adelaide's embrace, he is compelled to spoil it. Love's vindictive scam is a revenge on marriage, and, more particularly, on the idea of the couple. The achievement of "Tryst" is to suggest a twin tragedy, to open a window onto George's psychotic deadness, as well as onto Adelaide's oversized heart. The narrative captures something that is rarely acknowledged in life: the envy that makes it impossible for some wounded souls to show gratitude or to accept goodness when it is finally offered. ♦



*Sandra Bernhard, in New York, March 30, 2006. Photograph by Max Vadukul.*

brand names of designer-jean companies. This isn't comedy; it's vamping.

Somewhere toward the middle of the evening, Bernhard contrives to change out of her dress and into a T-shirt and jeans. For three minutes, she swans around the stage in bra and panties—a yenta's idea of recklessness—while recounting any old thing from the bargain basement of her imagination: the price of her belt, the name of her cobbler, the year she bought her cowboy boots. "This shit's taking forever," she says of the costume change, in one of her few close brushes with the truth. At the finale, an image projected behind the stage shows Bernhard leaving the theatre. Across the picture is scrawled "Fuk Sandra Bernhard." The vulgarity, like everything else in the show, is cosmetic; it would have been funnier if Bernhard's name had been misspelled. But in this particular misguided exercise in self-regard that would never happen.

Bernhard's act is a sort of confidence trick, selling the thrill of badness while picking the public's pocket. In the British playwright Karoline Leach's subtle, provocative play, "Tryst" (well directed by Joe Brancato, at the Promenade), the handsome George Love (Maxwell Caulfield) is the con man; he uses his performance of pukka Englishness to steal the hearts and the wallets of the young girls he marries, only to abandon them after the wedding night. "Mind you, I'm never cruel, I never hurt them. I've never hurt anyone. . . . And I

### THE CURRENT CINEMA

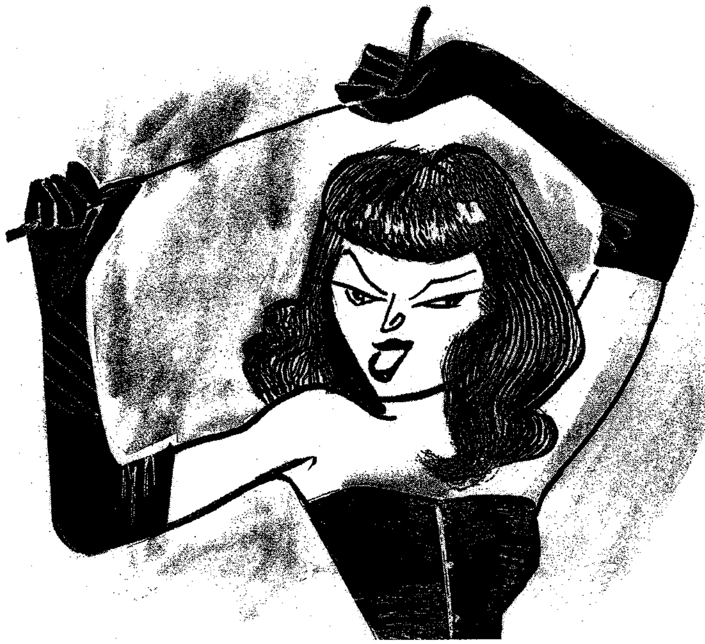
# EXPOSED

*"The Notorious Bettie Page" and "Friends with Money."*

### BY DAVID DENBY

"The Notorious Bettie Page" might be called a bio-pic devoted to a body—Gretchen Mol's body, which is seen in every degree of cladding, from full to scanty to blissfully naked. Mol plays Page, a real-life pinup queen of the nineteen-fifties, who appeared in coy nudie-cutie magazines like *Bachelor* and *Wink* and in highly unconvincing and frequently out-of-focus lesbian bondage movies with titles like "Sally's Punishment." As the naughty girl next door, in black lace and stiletto heels, she domesticated fetishism and flouted the postal laws. Page, who is still alive, was quite a celebrity in her day, until she abruptly disappeared, in 1957, into a life devoted to Jesus. In the movie, directed by Mary Harron, who also wrote the screenplay (with Guinevere Turner), Page is a nice girl from Nashville who grew up listening to the honeyed lilt of singing preachers—a naïf who never quite comprehends the meaning of what she is doing or the effect it has. After all, Adam and Eve were naked, weren't they? God, she is sure, wants her to be, too. When her earnest New York boyfriend, Marvin (Jonathan Woodward), an actor, registers his disgust at some bondage photographs in a greasy sex mag, she can't understand what he's riled about. The pictures, she thought, were just for fun. No one actually got hurt—she and the other girls were just horsing around. Friendly and well meaning, Page is as bland as a health faddist or a nudist-colony matron. Harron, who previously directed "I Shot Andy Warhol" (1996) and "American Psycho" (2000), offers a lightweight retelling of Page's life, a sketch, really, which doesn't probe very deeply into Page's bizarre mixture of exhibitionism and piety. But some scenes that might have been borderline exploitation, or just corny—Mol purring at the camera, or romping in the woods with a pair of cheetahs—turn out to be ineffably beautiful. When Mol pulls off her clothes and goes starkers in the great outdoors, we get a burst of visual glory that provokes something less than lust but more than awe.

"Bettie Page" begins in 1955, with a publicity-seeking smut hunt conducted by Senator Estes Kefauver (David Strathairn). As Page waits to testify before a Senate subcommittee, in a proper dress and gloves, we get a backward glance at her life. Born in the early twenties, she had a strict mother and a father who abused her, as did some of the local boys, who once kidnapped her for sex. Throughout her early life, Page is pushed this way and that by the fantasies and needs of men. Not surprisingly, she wants to be an actress, so she goes to New York, where she falls under the benevolent tutelage of a Method acting coach (Austin Pendleton), but onstage, huffing her way through Shaw, she's stiff and unsure of herself. Only when she's posing does she feel free and powerful and blessed. No matter how many times she is photographed, the camera cannot steal her soul.



*Gretchen Mol as the pinup queen Bettie Page in Mary Harron's new movie.*

TOM BACHTELL

"American Psycho," Harron's nastily satirical thrill-kill drama, came off as inordinately proud of its own heartlessness; it was all curdled smarminess and gleaming surfaces sprinkled with designer blood. This movie, however, is lively and sweet-tempered and often funny. "Bettie Page" was produced by the enterprising HBO, and the filmmakers' workup of the period is modest in scale but affectionately detailed: the black-and-white, fifties-New York night scenes have the noirish excitement of the Times Square episodes in "Sweet Smell of Success." The urban jungle gives way to Miami Beach (where Bettie retreated now and then) as a wondrous paradise, with dazzling beach scenes that look like Technicolor and interiors in soothing pastels. It's the American fifties as depicted in the movies of the time, in a visual style shaped by a fascination with the corrupt pleasures of the city and a yearning for clean-washed nature. In one way, however, Harron and her crew are realists. They have created a kind of comic archeology of postwar smut, and the exuberant, casually lousy aura of that world feels right. There are the primitively designed magazines, with their smudgy black-and-white photographs; the boyish "camera club" enthusiasts, their Adam's apples bobbing up and down in excitement as they shoot Page in a black negligee in a suburban living room; and a couple of kindly dirty-picture peddlers, Paula and Irving Klaw (Lili Taylor and Chris Bauer), who run a movie-star photo-service store in Manhattan with a backstairs trade in "specialty" items for connoisseurs. During bondage shoots, the Klaws offer brisket and good advice; they're so chatty and matter-of-fact that they might be small-time manufacturers in the garment industry.

Porn is now a multibillion-dollar product available to every kid with a computer, and, inevitably, the actual Bettie Page has been revived on the Internet as the star of her own camp cult. Posted photographs of her reveal a pretty woman with black hair, strong shoulders and thighs, and thrust-out breasts. That big fifties body—a Buick that smiles—is very different from Mol's slenderly elegant torso (they don't go to the same gym). Mol, who is blond, has been given dark-brown hair, though the hoodlike bangs and tresses draped around her neck are pure Page; and thick, dark makeup effectively coarsens her eyes and lips into an equivalent of Page's painted, pantherish face. Mol is good, but she obviously hasn't been asked to reveal Bettie Page's subconscious. As Harron conceives Page's character, and as Mol plays her, she is not a sexual conqueror like, say, Ava Gardner; in fact, she's not a sexual person at all. She picks up a good-looking kid on the beach in Miami, but there's never any sense that she's excited by him—or that she wants anything from any man. Is this the truth or just Mary Harron's take on it? In "American Psycho," Harron feasted again and again on Christian Bale's smooth, muscled-up torso. As a filmmaker, she appears to be more interested in the iconography of the body than in passion or emotions—in flaunting sex rather than the thing itself.

Satirizing the hysteria caused by an innocent girl who likes to disrobe is a good joke, but there's a problem with Harron's approach: it leaches all the danger out of the subject. In this movie, there isn't any genuine power in erotic imagery or any menace in perversion. Is pornography really so tame and ridiculous? I doubt that many people's behavior is much changed by it, but getting deep into something like S & M imagery is probably not the sanest way to burn up your time. By exposing so much of Gretchen Mol, Mary Harron has given us the gift of nakedness and beauty while, paradoxically, exercising her own kind of censorship.

Nicole Holofcener, the writer and director of the independently made comedy "Friends with Money," had a fine idea for a movie: how would three well-off married women (Catherine Keener, Frances McDormand, and Joan Cusack), living in Los Angeles, sustain a friendship with a younger woman who is single, broke, working as a housekeeper, and given to meaningless relationships with jerks? By most standards, and particularly by the standards of wealthy Los Angeles, Olivia (Jennifer Aniston) is a loser, and the wealthy do not like to hang out with losers. (It's never made clear how the women managed to become friends in the first place.) In a series of tense, well-written ensemble scenes, "Friends with Money" explores not only the gossip and shifting alliances in these relationships but the three marriages as well, which are not as stable as they seem.

Holofcener, who also directed "Lovely and Amazing" (2002), has many small and medium-sized perceptions—for instance, that the three women might keep Olivia around because she makes them feel better about themselves. The trouble with Holofcener's scheme is that the center of the movie is dead. Olivia has no drives or hopes or powerful regrets. She has nothing to say, and Aniston does most of her acting with her lower lip, which she wrinkles and tucks under the upper one—it's a technique, of sorts. She pulls so little out of herself that we lose all interest in her by the middle of the picture. A better character by far is Frances McDormand's successful clothing designer, who has a good career and a nice husband yet throws noisy fits over such trivial matters as having someone grab her parking space or slow service in a restaurant. McDormand, setting her jaw and turning her voice into a chisel, brings her usual concentration to the snappish impatience of a woman whose rage is unappeasable because its only cause is the fear of life closing in on her. Catherine Keener and Jason Isaacs get a quick-tempo rhythm going as a pair of married screenwriters who turn every conversation into a fight; Joan Cusack is both warm and biting as a woman with very little to do; and round-eyed Simon McBurney, as McDormand's husband, does something interesting and difficult as a gentle, slightly effeminate fellow so ambiguous in his manner that both men and women take him to be gay. McBurney, who looks a bit like a Beatrix Potter hedgehog, is essentially a theatre person, but, with the right roles, he could become a brilliantly commanding movie performer. ♦

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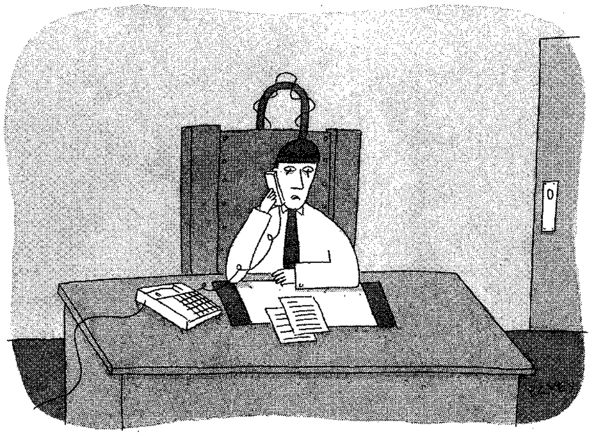
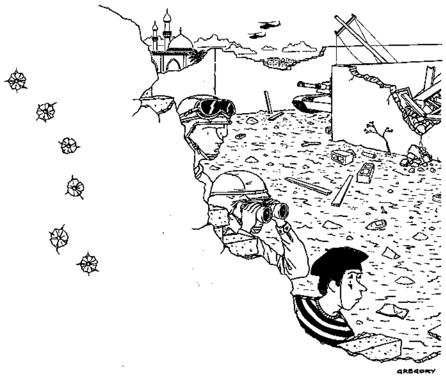
# CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

*Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Lee Lorenz, must be received by Sunday, April 16th. Finalists in the April 3rd contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the May 1st issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.*

## THE WINNING CAPTION



*"Cancel my twelve-oh-one."*
Richard Nathanson, New York City



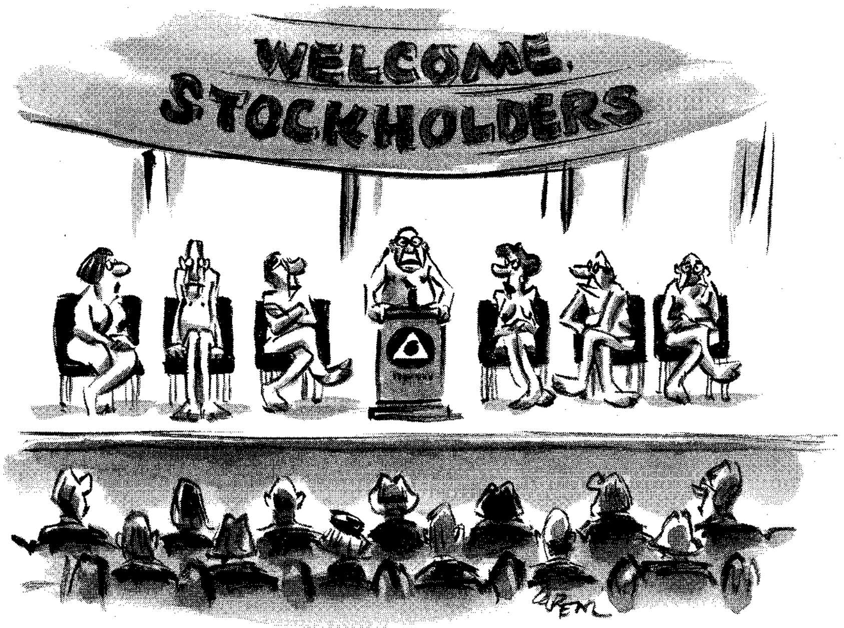
## THE FINALISTS

*"Not a good day for a street fair."*
Howie Ritt, Fair Lawn, N.J.

*"O.K., send him in. But this goes against the Geneva conventions."*
Mark Chalfant, Washington, D.C.

*"It's not good—looks like they've got a full interpretive-dance troupe."*
James Watts, Tulsa, Okla.

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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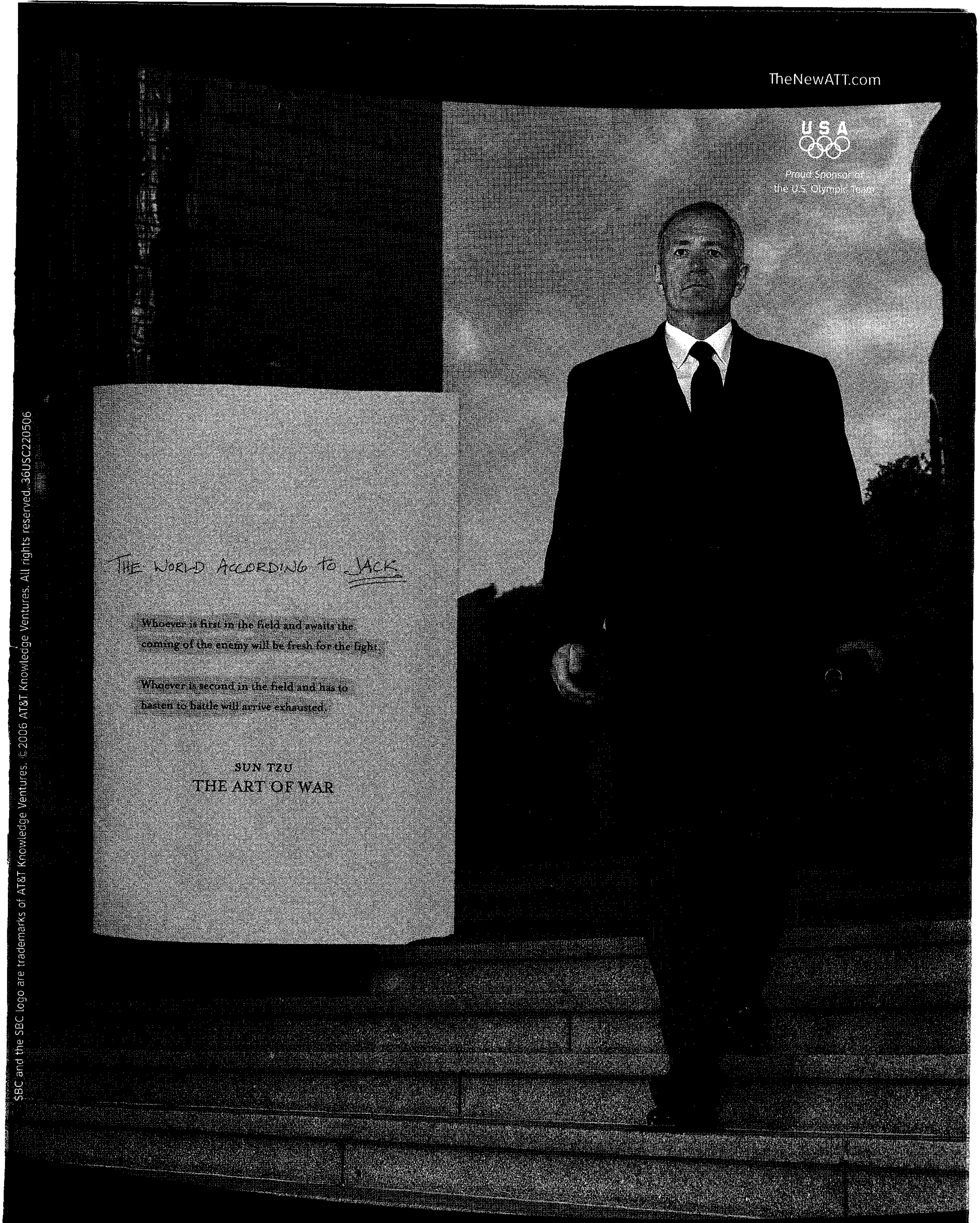
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Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy will be fresh for the fight.

Whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted.

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Jack uses the most complete and secure, unified MPLS network of the new AT&T to oversee operations from Topeka to Taiwan and seek out all forms of inspiration.

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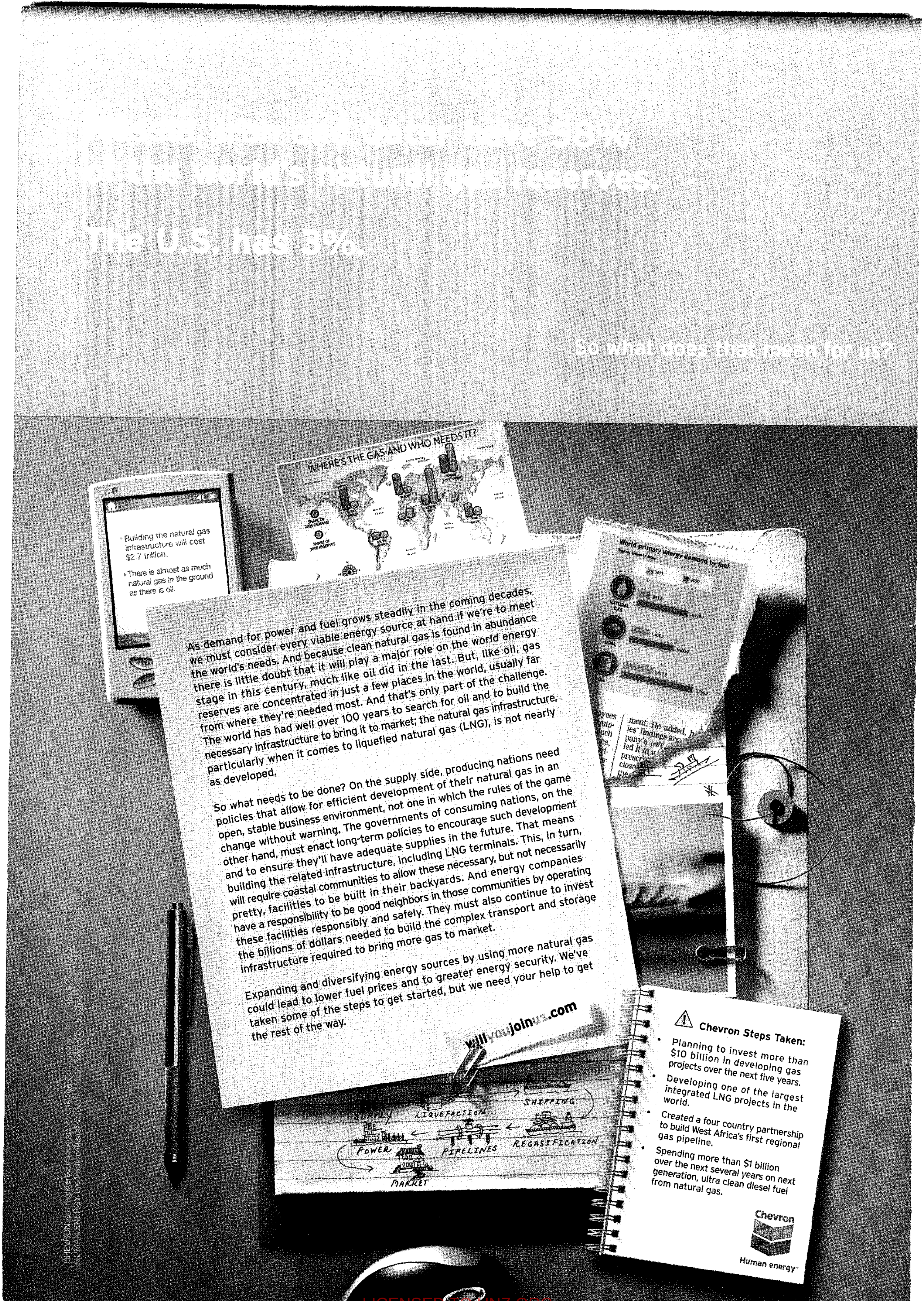

Russia, Iran and Qatar have 58%
of the world's natural gas reserves.
The U.S. has 3%.
So what does that mean for us?
Building the natural gas infrastructure will cost $2.7 trillion.
There is almost as much natural gas in the ground as there is oil.
WHERE'S THE GAS AND WHO NEEDS IT?
World primary energy demand by fuel
NATURAL GAS
COAL
SUPPLY
LIQUEFACTION
SHIPPING
REGASIFICATION
PIPELINES
POWER
MARKET

As demand for power and fuel grows steadily in the coming decades, we must consider every viable energy source at hand if we're to meet the world's needs. And because clean natural gas is found in abundance there is little doubt that it will play a major role on the world energy stage in this century, much like oil did in the last. But, like oil, gas reserves are concentrated in just a few places in the world, usually far from where they're needed most. And that's only part of the challenge. The world has had well over 100 years to search for oil and to build the necessary infrastructure to bring it to market; the natural gas infrastructure, particularly when it comes to liquefied natural gas (LNG), is not nearly as developed.

So what needs to be done? On the supply side, producing nations need policies that allow for efficient development of their natural gas in an open, stable business environment, not one in which the rules of the game change without warning. The governments of consuming nations, on the other hand, must enact long-term policies to encourage such development and to ensure they'll have adequate supplies in the future. That means building the related infrastructure, including LNG terminals. This, in turn, will require coastal communities to allow these necessary, but not necessarily pretty, facilities to be built in their backyards. And energy companies have a responsibility to be good neighbors in those communities by operating these facilities responsibly and safely. They must also continue to invest the billions of dollars needed to build the complex transport and storage infrastructure required to bring more gas to market.

Expanding and diversifying energy sources by using more natural gas could lead to lower fuel prices and to greater energy security. We've taken some of the steps to get started, but we need your help to get the rest of the way.

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⚠ **Chevron Steps Taken:**

- Planning to invest more than $10 billion in developing gas projects over the next five years.
- Developing one of the largest integrated LNG projects in the world.
- Created a four country partnership to build West Africa's first regional gas pipeline.
- Spending more than $1 billion over the next several years on next generation, ultra clean diesel fuel from natural gas.

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